Dec. 30, 1950

THE NEW YORKER

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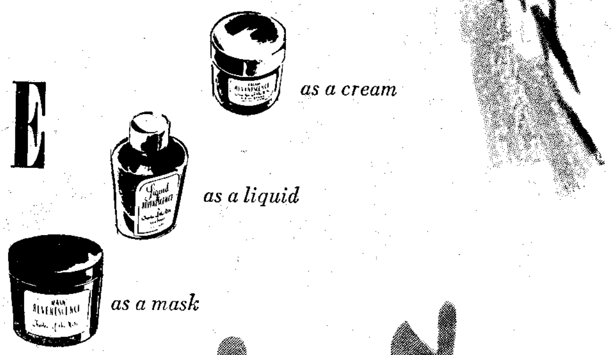

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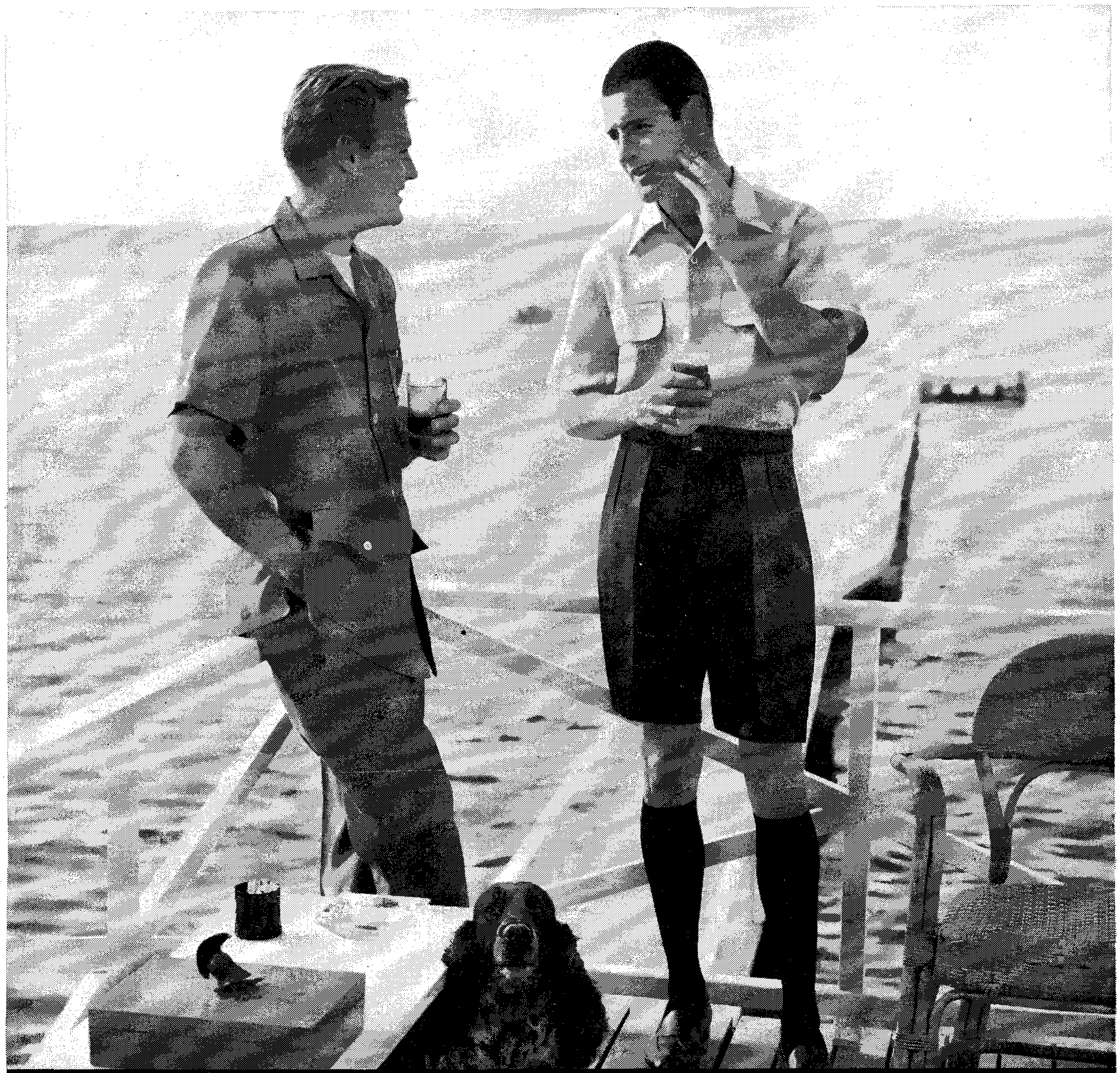

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

HAPPY NEW YEAR
TO ALL

A CONSCIENTIOUS CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF INTEREST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

THE THEATRE

(E. and W. mean East and West of Broadway.)

PLAYS

Affairs of State—Love in Washington, D.C., from the viewpoint of a Frenchman, Louis Verneuil, who, in his first play in English, manages to sound a good deal like American playwrights on the same subject. Celeste Holm, gay and handsome, heads a cast that includes Reginald Owen, Barbara O'Neil, and Shepperd Strudwick. (Music Box, 45th St., W. CI 6-4636. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:30.)

Bell, Book and Candle—Lilli Palmer makes a fine amateur sorceress and Rex Harrison is excellent as her bewitched admirer in John van Druten's first-rate comedy about thaumaturgy in Manhattan. Scott McKay, Jean Adair, and Larry Gates are also mixed up in the magic. (Ethel Barrymore, 47th St., W. CI 6-0390. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:30.)

Black Chiffon—A mighty slender British exercise in psychiatry, played for more than it is worth by Flora Robson and the other members of a mighty strong British cast. (48th St. Theatre, 48th St., E. CI 5-4396. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:40. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:40.)

The Country Girl—Uta Hagen gives a magnificent performance in Clifford Odets' rather uneven play concerning a drunken actor and his long-suffering wife. Paul Kelly is highly satisfactory in the other leading role, and Steven Hill, Louis Veda Quince, and Joseph Sullivan provide competent support. (Lyceum, 45th St., E. LU 2-3897. Nightly, except Tuesday, Jan. 2, at 8:40. Matinées Saturdays and Monday, Jan. 1, at 2:40.)

Hilda Crane—A play by Samson Raphaelson about a girl who loved a college professor but married a lawnmower manufacturer. It will surely delight matinée audiences, but it may be a little too muddled and naïve for the public in general. Jessica Tandy heads a good cast, which includes Evelyn Varden, John Alexander, and Beulah Bondi. (Coronet, 49th St., W. CI 6-8870. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:40. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:40.)

The Lady's Not for Burning—Christopher Fry's comedy about a man who wants to be executed and a girl who doesn't offers some praiseworthy verse and some that is just soporific. John Gielgud and Pamela Brown are very fine in the leading roles. (Royale, 45th St., W. CI 5-5760. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:30. Matinées Thursdays and Saturdays at 2:30.)

Peter Pan—Jean Arthur is the boy who wouldn't grow up in this spirited revival of Barrie's fantasy, which undoubtedly still has its enthusiasts. Boris Karloff is Captain Hook, Marcia Henderson is Wendy, and there is some appealing incidental music by Leonard Bernstein. (St. James, 44th St., W. LA 4-4664. Nightly, except Mondays and Tuesday, Jan. 2, at 8:40. Matinées Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2:40.)

Ring Round the Moon—Jean Anouilh's comedy, as translated by Christopher Fry, is as shapeless as a haystack but it contains a lot of hilarious moments. Gilbert Miller has arranged a strikingly good-looking production, and Lucile Watson, Stella Andrew, Georgina Cookson, Oscar Karlweis, and Denholm Elliott are all very charming in it. (Martin Beck, 45th St., W. CI 6-6363. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:40. Matinées Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Thursday, Dec. 28, at 2:40.)

Season in the Sun—A comedy, and a good one, written by Wolcott Gibbs and based, loosely, on his stories about Fire Island in *The New Yorker*. With Richard Whorf, Nancy Kelly, Paula Laurence, Anthony Ross, and King Calder. (Cort, 48th St., E. CI 5-4289. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:40. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:40.)

Long Runs—**THE COCKTAIL PARTY:** T. S. Eliot's play about an unorthodox psychiatrist and three of his patients. Now with Henry Daniell. (Henry Miller, 43rd St., E. BR 9-3970. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:35. Matinées Thursdays and Saturdays at 2:35.) . . . **THE HAPPY TIME:** A portrait of a breezy and irresponsible French-Canadian family. Roger Dann now has the lead. (Plymouth, 45th St., W. CI 6-9156. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:35. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:35.) . . . **THE MEMBER OF THE WEDDING:** Carson McCullers' novel dealing with a lonely adolescent, turned into a play with Ethel Waters, Julie Harris, and Brandon De Wilde. (Empire, Broadway at 40th St. PE 6-9540. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:40. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:40.) . . . **MISTER ROBERTS:** John Forsythe has replaced Henry Fonda on the deck of that Navy cargo ship. (Alvin, 52nd St., W. CI 5-5226. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:30. Matinées Saturdays and Sunday at 2:30. Closes Saturday, Jan. 6.)

Scheduled to open too late for review in this issue:

King Lear—Louis Calhern in Shakespeare's tragedy, along with Arnold Moss, Edith Atwater, and Nina Foch. Directed by John Houseman, and produced by Robert L. Joseph and Alexander H. Cohen. (National, 41st St., W. PE 6-8220. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:30.)

New York City Theatre Company—Shaw's "Captain Brassbound's Conversion," the first in a series of three plays to be presented by the company. With Edna Best and John Archer. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. CI 6-8989. Nightly, except Monday, at 8:30. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2:30. Closes Sunday, Jan. 7.)

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THE NEW YORKER
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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

It is essential that subscribers ordering a change of address give four weeks' notice and provide their old as well as their new address.

Twentieth Century—A revival of the Ben Hecht-Charles MacArthur comedy, with José Ferrer and Gloria Swanson leading the cast. Directed by Mr. Ferrer. The third of a series of subscription productions offered by the American National Theatre and Academy. (ANTA Playhouse, 52nd St., W. Nightly, except Tuesday, at 8:45. Matinées Thursdays and Saturday at 2:45. Closes Friday, Jan. 5. For information about subscriptions and tickets, call LU 2-0880.)

MUSICALS

Bless You All—Arnold Auerbach wrote the sketches; Harold Rome did the music and lyrics; and Helen Tamiris handled the choreography for this revue, which is good about half the time. The cast, directed by John C. Wilson, includes Mary McCarty, Jules Munshin, and Pearl Bailey. (Mark Hellinger, Broadway at 51st St. PL 7-7064. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:30.)

Call Me Madam—Ethel Merman's strange, brassy charm has never been more effective than it is in this piece about a lady ambassador. The book is by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse; Irving Berlin wrote the admirable songs; George Abbott is the director; and in the cast are Paul Lukas, Alan Hewitt, Russell Nype, and Pat Harrington. (Imperial, 45th St., W. CO 5-2412. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:30.)

Guys and Dolls—One of the fastest, toughest, and funniest musical comedies you ever saw has been assembled by Abe Burrows and Jo Swerling, who based their story on one by Damon Runyon. Frank Loesser wrote the delightful music and lyrics, and George S. Kaufman's direction is superlative. Sam Levene, Isabel Bigley, Robert Alda, and Vivian Blaine are just right in the leading roles. (46th Street Theatre, 46th St., W. CI 6-4271. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:30.)

Michael Todd's Peep Show—Six former burlesque comics provide the humor in this scuffle of Mr. Todd's with the theatre, and sex is attended to by a bevy of appetizing girls wearing as little as possible. Bobby Clark directed the sketches, and the music includes an offering from the King of Thailand. Only for those who like their entertainment rough and noisy. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. CI 5-4878. Nightly, except Tuesday, Jan. 2, at 8:30. Matinées Saturdays, and Monday, Jan. 1, at 2:30.)

Out of This World—Cole Porter wrote the music and lyrics for this musical about Jupiter and his amorous carryings on in modern Greece, but, except for Lemuel Ayers' stylish sets and costumes and a fine comic performance by Charlotte Greenwood, the evening is pretty much of a disappointment. With David Burns, William Eythe, Priscilla Gillette, and William Redfield. (Century, Seventh Ave. at 59th St. CI 7-3121. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:30.)

Pardon Our French—The audience participation in this new Olsen-and-Johnson frolic is not quite as violent as it has been in the past, but the abrasion of your nerves may still be considerable. The two heroes are abetted by Marty May, Denise Darcel, Helene Stanley, and, for no reason in particular, six midgets. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. CI 7-2887. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2:30 and Sundays at 3.)

Long Runs—**GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES:** Anita Loos's girls, Lorelei Lee and Dorothy Shaw,

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brought back to life and set to music. Carol Channing, Yvonne Adair, and Jack McCauley are prominent in the large cast. (Ziegfeld, Sixth Ave. at 54th St. CI 5-5200. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:30.) . . . **KISS ME, KATE:** Anne Jeffreys and Ted Scott now have the leads in this Cole Porter show. (Shubert, 44th St., W. CI 6-5990. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:30.) . . . **SOUTH PACIFIC:** Melodious life on an island within small-boat distance of Bali Ha'i. Ray Middleton is currently playing opposite Mary Martin. (Majestic, 44th St., W. CI 6-0730. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8:25. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:25.)

OPENINGS

(There are often last-minute changes in dates and curtain times, so it is a good idea to verify them before starting out.)

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE—Fredric March and Florence Eldridge in Arthur Miller's adaptation of the Ibsen play. Produced by Lars Nordenson and directed by Robert Lewis. Opens Thursday, Dec. 28. (Broadhurst, 44th St., W. CI 6-6699. Nightly, except Monday, Jan. 1, at 8:40; opening-night curtain at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:40.)

SECOND THRESHOLD—A play completed by Philip Barry just before his death, and revised by Robert E. Sherwood. The cast is headed by Clive Brook and Margaret Phillips. Staged and produced by Alfred de Liagre, Jr. Opens Tuesday, Jan. 2. (Morosco, 45th St., W. CI 6-6230. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8:40; opening-night curtain at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:40.)

MISCELLANY

ARMS AND THE MAN—A theatre-in-the-round production of Shaw's play, with Francis Lederer and Sam Wanamaker. (Arena, Hotel Edison, 234 W. 47th St. PL 7-1093. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8:40. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2:40.)

HASTY PUDDING CLUB OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY—Presenting its 1950 production, a musical called "Buddha Knows Best." (Hunter College Playhouse, Park Ave. at 68th St. Thursday, Dec. 28, and Saturday, Dec. 30, at 8:30. For tickets, call MU 2-4600, Ext. 121.)

PEARL PRIMUS—With her company, in a dance recital. (Central High School of Needle Trades, 225 W. 24th St. Saturday, Jan. 6, at 8:15. For tickets, call GR 3-1391.)

NIGHT LIFE

(Some places at which you will find music and other entertainment. They are open every evening, except as indicated.)

DINNER, SUPPER, AND DANCING

AMBASSADOR, Park Ave. at 51st St. (PL 5-1000)—In the Trianon Room, the dance orchestras of Jules Lande and Nino de Moraes soothe the guests at dinner and supper.

BILTMORE, Madison Ave. at 43rd St. (MU 7-7000)—Except Sundays and New Year's Day, Harold Nagel's orchestra is around at cocktail time in the Palm Court and during dinner in the Madison Room. No dancing either place.

GOGI'S LARUE, 45 E. 58th St. (EL 5-6374)—Ted Straeter in all his considerable glory (dinner jacket, carnation, and blithe piano), turning out handsome dance music in this luxurious jewel box. Gogi's romantic violinists cruise the room during intermission. Fridays, like Princeton proms, are black tie. Closed Mondays.

EL MOROCCO, 154 E. 54th St. (EL 5-8769)—A law unto itself, a kingdom of its own. Chauncey Gray's orchestra and Chiquito's rumba band for dancing.

NEW YORKER, Eighth Ave. at 34th St. (LO 3-1000)—The Terrace Room, bless its big heart, has a new ice show at dinner and supper. Alice Farrar and Carol Lynne are its most noticeable objets d'art. Dancing.

PIERRE, Fifth Ave. at 61st St. (TE 8-8000)—In the Cotillion Room, Tony and Sally De Marco, throwing each other around, and Robert Maxwell, fingering his hot harp with the greatest of ease. Stanley Melba's orchestra and a rumba band do the dance music. All hands perform at dinner (except New Year's Eve) and supper. . . . ¶ Stanley Worth's orchestra plays for cocktail, dinner, and supper dancing in the elegant Café Pierre. Page Morton, who sings in several tongues (seriatim, that is), is at the piano between sets.

PLAZA, Fifth Ave. at 58th St. (PL 9-3000)—In the Persian Room, during dinner (except New Year's Eve) and supper, Kyle MacDonnell sings happily, and the Beatrice Kraft dancers gyrate sardonically. Mark Monte's Continentals and Dick La Salle's orchestra play pretty dance music. Closed New Year's Day. . . . ¶ The Rendez-Vous Room, which has a distinctly pink-champagne air, offers Maximillian Bergere's and Nicolas Matthey's flowing dance orchestras after eight-thirty. . . . ¶ Leo LeFleur's music tinkles in the Palm Court during the cocktail hour. No dancing.

RITZ-CARLTON, Madison Ave. at 46th St. (MU 8-3000)—Emery Deutsch's dinner music in the Oval Room, except Sundays, when Harold Sandler's orchestra fills in. . . . ¶ The Palm Court offers Mr. Sandler's cocktail music from four to seven, except Sundays. No dancing in either room.

ROOSEVELT, Madison Ave. at 45th St. (MU 6-9200)—Guy Lombardo is again tenting on his old campground, the Grill, at dinner and supper. Closed New Year's Day.

ST. REGIS, Fifth Ave. at 55th St. (PL 3-4500)—In the Maisonette, at dinner and supper, there is Jane Morgan, a magazine-cover sort of girl, doing a fair enough job with some cheery songs. Milt Shaw and Horace Diaz, those old family retainers, provide the dance music. Closed New Year's Day.

SAVOY-PLAZA, Fifth Ave. at 59th St. (EL 5-2600)—Irving Conn's dance orchestra is on tap in the Café Lounge at dinner and supper, as well as for tea dancing every afternoon except Sunday, Dec. 31.

SHERRY-NETHERLAND, Fifth Ave. at 59th St. (EL 5-2800)—The Carnaval Room, the assembly hall for a regal element of our population, has the decorous dinner and supper dance music of a Lester Lanin group and of Jan Brunesco's gypsies. Closed New Year's Day.

STATLER, Seventh Ave. at 33rd St. (PE 6-5000)—In the Café Rouge, from dinnertime on, Ray Anthony's orchestra for dancing. On Friday, Dec. 29, Frankie Carle's orchestra moves in.

STORK CLUB, 3 E. 53rd St. (PL 3-1940)—Danger: Children at play. Suzy Mulligan sings, and Payson Ré's orchestra and a rumba band supply the dance music.

VERSAILLES, 151 E. 50th St. (PL 8-0310)—The original Edith Piaf, a widely imitated product for which you should accept no substitute, singing about life, French division. On Wednesday, Jan. 3, Florence Desmond, a very funny girl, replaces her. Emile Petti's orchestra and Panchito's rumba band for dancing.

WALDORF-ASTORIA, Park Ave. at 49th St. (EL 5-3000)—At dinner (except New Year's Eve) and supper in the Wedgwood Room, the dances of Nelle Fisher and Jerry Ross, plus the choral work of the Continentals. Emil Coleman's orchestra and Mischa Borr's dance band alternate. On New Year's Day, only the Borr band will show up. . . . ¶ In the Flamingo Room, Michael Zarin's orchestra for dancing. Closed New Year's Day.

NOTE—The Rainbow Room is open for cocktails from four-thirty to nine, with Ford Harrison and his cohorts making cocktail music. Closed Sundays. The address: 30 Rockefeller Plaza. The phone: CI 6-5800.

SMALL AND CHEERFUL

(No dancing, unless noted.)

DRAKE ROOM, 71 E. 56th St. (PL 5-0600): That famous ceramic tree glitters brightly, but no more brightly than the piano arabesques of Cy Walter, who's here at dinner and again at supper. . . . **LE COQ ROUGE,** 65 E. 56th St. (PL 3-8887): Eddie Davis, who was on the bandstand at Helen of Troy's coming-out party, starts his bouncy music at eight. Closed New Year's Day. . . . **LITTLE CLUB,** 70 E. 55th St. (PL 3-9425): Except New Year's Day, Toni Koves and her gypsy trio from dinnertime on. Ernie Warren's trio, which heats up a bit at times, checks in later in the evening. On New Year's Day, Nancy Reed's piano will be the only competition for the tall talk. . . . **ARMANDO'S,** 54 E. 55th St. (PL 3-0760): Subdued piano and fiddle after nine-thirty for a not especially subdued audience. Closed New Year's Day. . . . **EL CHICO,** 80 Grove St., at Sheridan Sq. (CH 2-4646): A musical-comedy version of Spain, with furious indigenous dances by both cast and clients. Closed New Year's Day. . . . **VIEUX CARRÉ,** 13 E. 55th St. (PL 3-7296): Except Mondays, Louis Hawkins, one of the town's most debonair hosts, turns his fine Southern hand to lighthearted piano and conversation in this playful reminder of a New Orleans balcony, from cocktails through supper. The room is over L'Aiglon Restaurant. . . . **NINO,** 10 E. 52nd St. (PL 3-9014): In the bar of this busy bit of 1960 décor, Rudy Timfield's dinner and supper piano. . . . **CELESTE,** 28 W. 56th St. (JU 6-9063): After the theatre, Portia Nelson sings forgotten songs in a not-to-be-forgotten voice, to the thoughtful piano of Bart Howard. Jim Mahoney is the dinner pianist. Closed Mondays. . . . **LA ZAMBRA,** 127 W. 52nd St. (CI 7-9131): Vicente Gomez, doing wonderful things with a guitar at dinner and supper. Closed Tuesdays. . . . **CAFÉ MADISON,** Madison Ave. at 58th St. (EL 5-5000): Piano music from six to nine, Mondays through Fridays, and Bernie Dolen's orchestra for dancing during the same hours on Saturdays and from noon to nine on Sundays.

BIG AND BRASSY

COPACABANA, 10 E. 60th St. (PL 8-1060): Henny Youngman, breaking in his new act for Lindy's, and Luba Malina, beautiful and sometimes amusing. Showgirls, too, of whom Betty Harris sings the prettiest and Jean Caples prances the prettiest. On Thursday, Jan. 4, a new show, topped by Danny Thomas, a very great humorist. Dancing. . . . **DIAMOND HORSESHOE,** 235 W. 46th St. (CI 6-6500): Another Billy Rose extravaganza, turning time backward to such early settlers as Joe Howard, the Saxon Sisters, and W. C. Handy. Noble Sissle is the bandmaster. Dancing. . . . **OLD KNICK MUSIC HALL,** Second Ave. at 54th St. (PL 9-2724): A real rumpus room, with hiss-the-villain melodrama, singing waiters, old movies (trimmed with Paul Killiam's ad-lib, punning commentary), and other nonsense. Dancing. Closed New Year's Day. . . . **CAFÉ SOCIETY,** 2 Sheridan Sq. (CH 2-2737): Josh White, a young man with a guitar and a compelling stage whisper, which he puts to work on Americana dating all the way from 1850 to 1950. Fletcher Henderson's band plays for dancing. Starting Thursday, Jan. 4, Josephine Premice, a Calypso operator, and Phil Napoleon and his Memphis Five will take over. Cliff Jackson will continue at the keyboard during the intermissions. It's better here late in the evening.

SUPPER CLUBS

(No dancing, unless noted.)

BLUE ANGEL, 152 E. 55th St. (PL 3-5998): Connie Sawyer, that admirable comedian; Susan Reed, that mountaineer skylark; George Prentice, or fun among the puppets; and Bill Hayes, an up-and-coming singer. Stuart Ross, the Herman Chittison Trio, and Harold Cooke dish up the customary opulent musical back-

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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ground. Closed New Year's Day. . . . ¶ In the lounge, except Mondays, Ralph Strain's persuasive cocktail and dinnertime piano, and, except Saturdays, the after-theatre piano fancies of the celebrated Eadie and Rack. . . . **LE RUBAN BLEU,** 4 E. 56th St. (PL 3-6426): Ronnie Graham, paddling his canoe in the far upper reaches of the stream of subconsciousness; Bibi Osterwald and the Three Riffs, singing high-velocity nonsense; Hugh Shannon, doing speakeasy songs in a pleasant speakeasy voice. The piano of Julius Monk and the light fantastic chamber music of the Norman Paris Trio provide the setting. . . . **VILLAGE VANGUARD,** 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (CH 2-9355): Richard Dyer-Bennet, the eminent balladier, is back here again. Between shows, the brisk dance music of Clarence Williams and Karl Lynch. Closed Mondays. . . . **ONE FIFTH AVENUE,** Fifth Ave. at 8th St. (SP 7-7000): Louise Howard, in mid-season form, poking fun at a variety of objects, human and inhuman. Bob Downey and Harold Fonville play valiant double piano, and Hazel Webster, of course, is the solo pianist. . . . **BYLINE ROOM,** 137 E. 52nd St. (PL 3-4759): Above the tumultuous Show Spot bar, Mabel Mercer sings her one-of-a-kind sad songs about the loveless love life of the moderns. Sam Hamilton is her pianist. . . . **SPIVY'S ROOF,** 139 E. 57th St. (PL 3-9322): Spivy shows up in her Swiss chalet late in the evening to run through her night-blooming ballads. . . . **LA COMMEDIA,** 59 W. 52nd St. (PL 9-3477): Starting around nine-thirty, the piano of Laurie Brewis, the jaunty little Londoner, and, after eleven, the not especially Christmassy carols of Jo Hurt. Closed New Year's Day. . . . **BON SOIR,** 40 W. 8th St. (OR 4-0531): Mae Barnes, the Harlem cannonball, gets rolling about ten-thirty. Jimmie Daniels, Norene Tate, and Garland Wilson, her three oldest pals, chip in now and then, and Alice Ghostley, a comparative newcomer, chirps the odd compositions of G. Wood, her pianist. Closed Mondays. . . . **CHEZ VITO,** Hotel Meurice, 145 W. 58th St. (CI 7-7440): The impish songs of Pat Rainey, a seductive girl with a sinuous voice.

MOSTLY FOR MUSIC

(No dancing, unless noted.)

EDDIE CONDON'S, 47 W. 3rd St. (GR 5-8639): Continued high winds and rampageous weather, mostly from Wild Bill Davison's free-wheeling trumpet. Cutty Cutshall, Buzzy Drootin, Edmond Hall, Bob Casey, Gene Schroeder, and sometimes Mr. Condon help him let joy reign unrefined. Ralph Sutton plays spontaneous-combustion piano between sets. On Tuesdays, visiting firebrands compound the chaos. Closed New Year's Day. . . . **NICK'S,** Seventh Ave. S. at 10th St. (CH 2-6683): Pee Wee Erwin's Dixieland band, with Andy Russo on trombone, is working here. Jam sessions on Sunday afternoons. Closed Tuesday, Jan. 2. . . . **JIMMY RYAN'S,** 53 W. 52nd St. (EL 5-9600): Jimmy Archey, Tommy Benford, Pops Foster, and Dick Wellstood, kicking a fair-sized gong around. Don Frye plays piano while they're outside for a smoke. Jam sessions Monday nights. Dancing. . . . **BIRDLAND,** 1678 Broadway, at 52nd St. (JU 6-1368): Through Wednesday, Jan. 3, Ella Fitzgerald and Billy Taylor's quartet, who are worth an hour of anyone's time. The next night, a new show, headed by Dizzy Gillespie's sextet and Lester Young's quintet. . . . **STUYVESANT CASINO,** 140 Second Ave., at 9th St. (GR 3-5289): Those Friday-night rigadoons. On Dec. 29, Wild Bill Davison, Max Kaminsky, Joe Marsala, Mezz Mezzrow, George Wettling, and Joe Sullivan. . . . **CENTRAL PLAZA,** 111 Second Ave., at 6th St. (AL 4-9800): More Friday-night fun in a boiler factory for the youngsters. This week (Dec. 29), Jimmy McPartland, Red Allen, Gene Sedric, Willie the Lion Smith, and Kansas Fields. Dancing.

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open weekdays from around 10 to between 5 and 6. They will all be closed New Year's Day.)

GALLERIES

African Sculpture and Cubism—Early paintings by Braque, Picasso, Léger, Severini, and others, plus a handsome selection of African sculptures of the sort that influenced these artists so strongly. (Segy, 708 Lexington Ave., at 57th St.; through Jan. 15.)

Americans in Paris—Oils and sculptures by eighteen young artists working in Paris, interesting as an indication of what the rising generation is up to. (Hacker, 24 W. 58th St.; through Dec. 30.)

Milton Avery—Monotypes taken from glass, as well as some small paintings, all executed in the last year or so, of such subjects as sea forms and birds. (Laurel, 108 E. 57th St.; through Dec. 30.)

Forrest Bess—Small oils, highly stylized and deliberately naïve in approach, in a promising first New York showing. (Parsons, 15 E. 57th St.; through Jan. 6.)

A Century of the American Railroad—Some charming old paintings, as well as a number of prints, posters, early timetables, and other memorabilia. (American British Art Gallery, 122 E. 55th St.; through Jan. 13.)

Joseph Cornell—A new set of his constructions, made from boxes, bits of broken glass, maps, trapezes, and other oddments. (Egan, 63 E. 57th St.; through Jan. 13.)

Salvador Dali—A large Madonna, plus some smaller works, all technically impeccable, as always, but the products of an inspiration that is now a little jaded. (Carstairs, 11 E. 57th St.; through Jan. 10.)

Dean Fausett—Competent and attractive landscapes, figure studies, and other works. (Kraushaar, 32 E. 57th St.; through Dec. 30.)

Les Fauves—Early paintings, all done during their Fauvist periods, by Matisse, Vlaminck, Braque, Derain, and lesser-known Frenchmen, in a lively and colorful showing. (Janis, 15 E. 57th St.; through Dec. 30.)

Fifteen Unknowns—Thirteen painters and two sculptors, none of whom has exhibited before, in this gallery's annual sifting out of new talent. (Kootz, 600 Madison Ave., at 57th St.; through Dec. 30.)

Alberto Giacometti—Sculptures by the Italian modernist, in his familiar, attenuated style, supplemented by a set of new paintings and drawings. (Matisse, 41 E. 57th St.; through Jan. 6.)

Gene Grant—Paintings, mostly of Paris, done with a graceful bow in Utrillo's direction. (Associated American Artists, 711 Fifth Ave., at 55th St.; through Jan. 6.)

Group Shows—At the **FEIGL,** 601 Madison Ave., at 57th St.: A rather hit-or-miss but cheerful showing of work by Soutine, Vlaminck, and other artists more or less connected with the Expressionist movement; through Dec. 30. . . . **LEVITT,** 559 Madison Ave., at 56th St.: Paintings and sculptures by Otis Dozier, Everett Spruce, Charles Umlauf, and others. Each artist has contributed two works, one dated 1940 and one 1950. Weekdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evening until 9:30; through Dec. 30. . . . **MILCH,** 55 E. 57th St.: Americans of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including Ryder, Mary Cassatt, Bellows, and Sargent; through Dec. 30. . . . **PERIDOT,** 6 E. 12th St.: Nice oils by Weldon Kees, James Brooks, Arthur Drexler, and others among the younger moderns; through Jan. 2. . . . **REHN,** 683 Fifth Ave., at 54th St.: Paintings by Alexander Brook, Franklin Watkins, Edward Hopper, and other Americans; through Dec. 29. . . . **ROSENBERG,** 16 E. 57th St.: New oils by Milton Avery, Karl Knaths, Abraham Rattner, and Max Weber; through Dec. 30.

Modern French—At the **CARRÉ,** 712 Fifth Ave., at 56th St.: Small paintings, most of them within the price range of the beginning collector, by Léger, Villon, Gromaire, and other contemporaries; through Jan. 13. . . . **NIVEAU,** 63 E. 57th St.: Paintings by Braque, Utrillo, Bombois, and others; through Jan. 31.

National Institute of Arts and Letters—Work by candidates for the Institute's 1951 art grants, among them Paul Cadmus, Milton Hebald, Edward Chavez, and Aaron Bohrod. (American Academy of Arts and Letters, Broadway at 155th St. Daily, except Mondays, 2 to 5; through Jan. 15.)

Old Master Drawings—The Durlacher Gallery's fourteenth annual exhibition, consisting mainly of sixteenth- through nineteenth-century works, and featuring excellent examples by Guardi, Callot, and van der Velde. (Durlacher, 11 E. 57th St.; through Dec. 30.)

Prints—An exhibition spanning the past six centuries and including etchings, lithographs, and engravings by such artists as Rembrandt, Holbein, and Lucas van Leyden. (Knoedler, 14 E. 57th St.; through Dec. 30.)

Sculpture—A large and well-selected collection tracing the progression from Rodin to such later men as Lehmbruck, Calder, and Henry Moore. (Buchholz, 32 E. 57th St.; through Jan. 13. Closes at 1 on Saturday, Dec. 30.)

Hedda Sterne—New paintings, abstract in style and executed in this artist's curiously feminine, fanciful manner. (Parsons, 15 E. 57th St.; through Jan. 6.)

Mark Toby—A new set of water colors, delicately abstract in style, by this artist from the Northwest. (Willard, 32 E. 57th St.; through Dec. 30.)

Some of This Week's Openings—At the **A.C.A.,** 63 E. 57th St.: Alice Neel; through Jan. 13. . . . **DOWNTOWN,** 32 E. 51st St.: John Marin; through Jan. 27. . . . **BERTHA SCHAEFER,** 32 E. 57th St.: Mariska Karasz; through Jan. 13. . . . **WEYHE,** 794 Lexington Ave., at 61st St.: Kit Barker; through Jan. 23.

MUSEUMS

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Italy at Work," a large collection of furniture, metalwork, glass, machinery, jewelry, and ceramics, as well as model interiors for a theatre lobby, a chapel, and a dining room, all intended to illustrate the progress of contemporary Italian design; through Jan. 31. . . . ¶ A comprehensive exhibition of American woodcuts and wood engravings, dated from 1670 to 1950; through Jan. 7. (Weekdays, 10 to 5; Sundays and New Year's Day, 1 to 5.)

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A show selected by a national jury and called "American Painting Today—1950," in which more than three hundred artists are represented; through Feb. 25. . . . ¶ Bronze sculptures, ancient and modern, from the permanent collection; through Jan. 21. . . . ¶ About fifty prints and drawings by Goya; through Feb. 28. (Weekdays, 10 to 5; Sundays and New Year's Day, 1 to 5.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—Sketches and pen-and-ink drawings by the late Charles Dana Gibson, including political cartoons, a couple of portraits, and many versions of the Gibson Girl. (Tuesdays, except Jan. 2, through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays and New Year's Day, 1 to 5; through Feb. 20.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—A retrospective of close to seventy-five oils by the Lithuanian-born French Expressionist Chaim Soutine, who died in 1943. (Weekdays, noon to 7; Sundays and New Year's Day, 1 to 7; through Jan. 7.)

Museum of Non-Objective Painting, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A group show by the Museum's regulars, among them Hilla Rebay and Josef Albers, as well as by some Germans as yet little known here. (Tuesdays through Satur-

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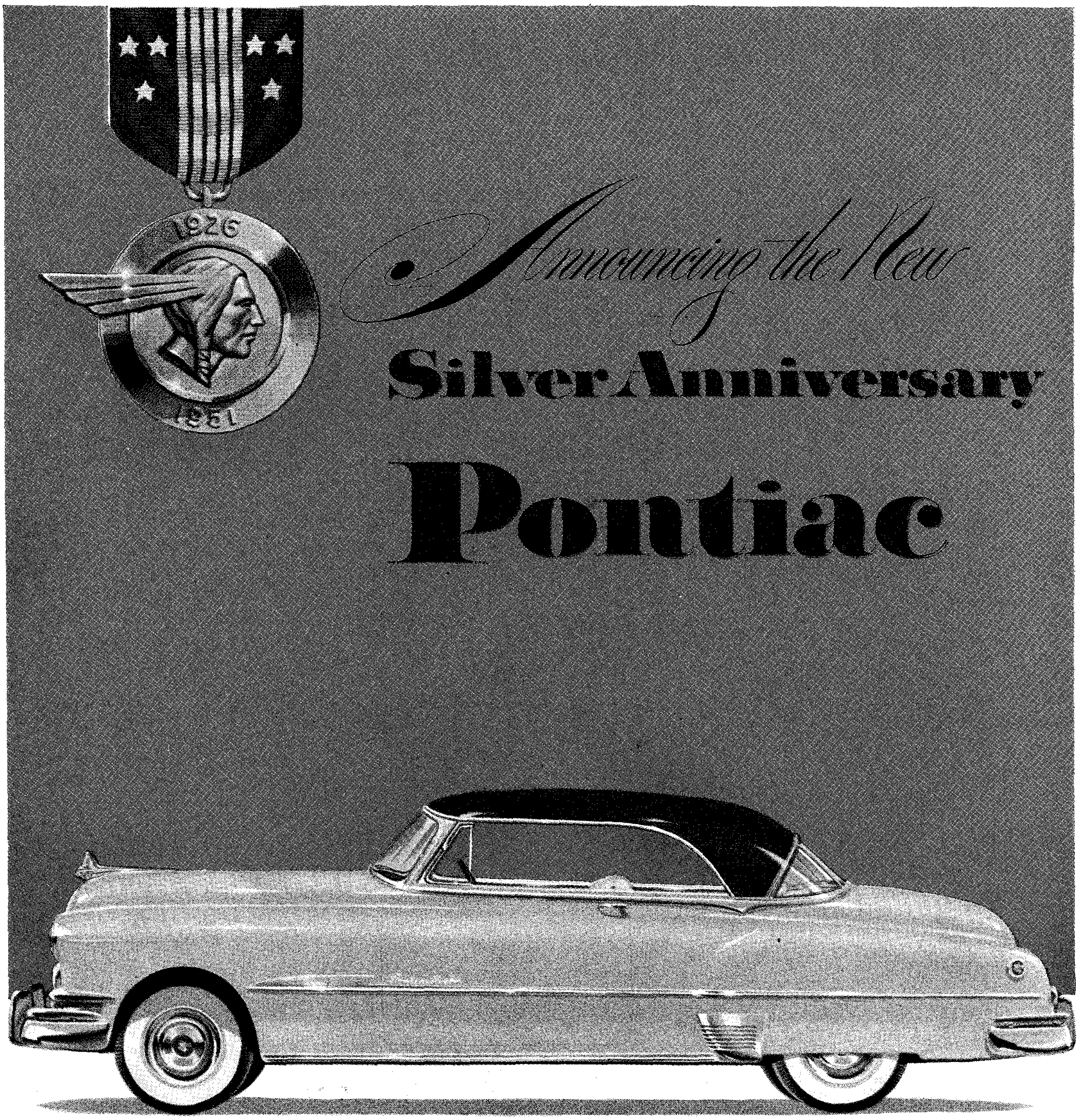

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days, 10 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6; through Jan. 31.)

Riverside Museum, 310 Riverside Dr., at 103rd St.—Paintings of Tibet and adjacent countries by Nicholas Roerich. (Daily, except New Year's Day, 1 to 5; through Jan. 31.)

Whitney Museum, 10 W. 8th St.—The Museum's seventeenth Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting, with a hundred and fifty-four works, by as many artists, which is more radical in style than usual; through Dec. 31. . . . ¶ A memorial showing of paintings and other works by Arshile Gorky; starting Jan. 5. (Daily, except Jan. 1-4, from 1 to 5.)

MUSIC

(The box-office number for Carnegie Hall is CI 7-7460; for Town Hall LU 2-4536, and for the Metropolitan Opera House PE 6-1210. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—Thursday, Dec. 28, at 8:15: "Il Trovatore," with Delia Rigal, Fedora Barbieri, Kurt Baum, and Leonard Warren. . . . ¶ Friday, Dec. 29, at 8: "Faust," with Nadine Conner, Margaret Roggero, Jussi Bjoerling, and Jerome Hines. . . . ¶ Saturday, Dec. 30, at 2: "Der Fliegende Holländer," with Ljuba Welitch, Hans Hotter, Set Svanholm, and Sven Nilsson. . . . ¶ Saturday, Dec. 30, at 8:15: "The Barber of Seville," with Lily Pons, Paolo Silveri, Giuseppe Di Stefano, and Cesare Siepi. (A non-subscription performance.) . . . ¶ Sunday, Dec. 31, at 8: "Fledermaus," with Ljuba Welitch, Patrice Munsel, Risë Stevens, Charles Kullman, and Richard Tucker. (A non-subscription performance.) . . . ¶ Monday, Jan. 1, at 8: "Faust," with Eleanor Steber, Anne Bollinger, Jussi Bjoerling, and Cesare Siepi. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Jan. 2, at 8:30: "Der Fliegende Holländer," with Margaret Harshaw, Jean Madeira, Paul Schoeffler, and Sven Nilsson. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Jan. 3, at 8:15: "Il Trovatore," with Delia Rigal, Fedora Barbieri, Kurt Baum, and Leonard Warren. . . . ¶ Thursday, Jan. 4, at 8:15: "Fledermaus," with Marguerite Piazza, Patrice Munsel, Set Svanholm, and Eugene Conley. . . . ¶ Friday, Jan. 5, at 8: "Der Rosenkavalier," with Helen Traubel, Risë Stevens, Fritz Krenn, and John Brownlee. . . . ¶ Saturday, Jan. 6, at 2: "Don Giovanni," with Ljuba Welitch, Eleanor Steber, Paolo Silveri, and Jerome Hines. . . . ¶ Saturday, Jan. 6, at 8:15: "Manon Lescaut," Dorothy Kirsten, Margaret Roggero, Jussi Bjoerling, and Giuseppe Valdengo.

ORCHESTRAS

Philharmonic-Symphony—At Carnegie Hall—George Szell conducting: Thursday, Dec. 28, at 8:45, and Friday, Dec. 29, at 2:30 (both with Rudolf Serkin, piano); Saturday, Dec. 30, at 8:45 (with Erica Morini, violin); Sunday, Dec. 31, at 2:45 (with Rudolf Serkin, piano); and Thursday, Jan. 4, at 8:45, and Friday, Jan. 5, at 2:30 (both with John Corigliano, violin).

Louisville Orchestra—Robert Whitney conducting, with Virgil Thomson as guest conductor and Martha Graham as dance soloist. (Carnegie Hall. Friday, Dec. 29, at 8:30.)

Philadelphia Orchestra—Ernest Ansermet conducting. (Carnegie Hall. Tuesday, Jan. 2, at 8:30.)

SPORTS

(The box-office number for Madison Square Garden is CO 5-6811.)

Boxing—At Madison Square Garden—Friday, Dec. 29: Walter Cartier vs. Eugene Hairston, middleweights, 10 rounds. . . . ¶ Friday, Jan. 5: Ike Williams vs. Jose Gatica, lightweights, 10 rounds. (Preliminaries at 8:30; main bouts at 10.)

College Basketball—At Madison Square Garden—Thursday, Dec. 28: L.I.U. vs. Western Kentucky, and C.C.N.Y. vs. Arizona. . . . ¶ Saturday, Dec. 30: St. John's vs. San Francisco, and Manhattan College vs. San Jose State. . . . ¶ Monday, Jan. 1: L.I.U. vs. South Carolina, and N.Y.U. vs. Cornell. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Jan. 2: C.C.N.Y. vs. St. John's, and Manhattan College vs. Dartmouth. . . . ¶ Thursday, Jan. 4: N.Y.U. vs. North Carolina, and L.I.U. vs. Bowling Green. . . . ¶ Saturday, Jan. 6: C.C.N.Y. vs. St. Joseph's, and St. John's vs. Syracuse. (Games begin at 8.)

Professional Basketball—At Madison Square Garden—Saturday, Dec. 30: Knicks vs. Boston. . . . ¶ Saturday, Jan. 6: Knicks vs. Syracuse. (Games begin at 3.)

Hockey—At Madison Square Garden—Sunday, Dec. 31: Rangers vs. Boston. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Jan. 3: Rangers vs. Detroit. (Games begin at 8:30.)

FOR CHILDREN

Concert—The Philharmonic-Symphony, Igor Buketoff conducting, with Susan Starr, eight-year-old pianist. (Carnegie Hall. CI 7-7460. Saturday, Jan. 6, at 11.)

Plays—By the **Junior Playhouse:** "Jack and the Beanstalk." (Kaufmann Auditorium, Y.M.H.A., Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. AT 9-9456. Thursday, Dec. 28, at 3, and Friday, Dec. 29, at 11 and 3.) . . . **Play-Mart:** "A Christmas Carol." (Carl Fischer Concert Hall, 165 W. 57th St. Thursday through Saturday, Dec. 28-30, at 1:30 and 3:15. For tickets, call TR 7-7591.) . . . **Children's World Theatre:** "The Christmas Bears." (Barbizon-Plaza Theatre, Sixth Ave. at 58th St. Thursday through Saturday, Dec. 28-30, at 2:30. For tickets, call PE 6-5536.) . . . **Kitten-Cat Company:** "The Cat That Hated Christmas." (Davenport Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. MU 5-2180. Thursday through Saturday, Dec. 28-30, at 1:30 and 3:30, and Sunday, Dec. 31, at 2:30.) . . . **National Youth Theatre:** "Marco Polo." (Master Institute Theatre, Riverside Dr. at 103rd St. RI 9-9279. Thursday through Monday, Dec. 28-Jan. 1, and Saturday, Jan. 6, at 11 and 2:30.) . . . **Junior Theatre:** "Hänsel and Gretel." (Carnegie Recital Hall. CI 7-7460. Saturday, Jan. 6, at 2:15.) . . . **Clare Tree Major Children's Theatre:** "King of the Golden River." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. ST 3-6700. Saturday, Jan. 6, at 3.)

Musicals—By the **Junior Theatre:** "The Cobbler of Fairyland." (Carnegie Recital Hall. CI 7-7460. Thursday through Saturday, Dec. 28-30, at 2:15.) . . . **American Young People's Theatre:** Musical-dance versions of "The Emperor's New Clothes" and other short pieces, with Tom Glazer as narrator and song leader. (Provincetown Playhouse, 133 Macdougal St. GR 7-9894. Thursday, Dec. 28, at 2:30; Friday and Saturday, Dec. 29-30, at 11:30 and 2:30; and Sunday, Dec. 31, at 2 and 4.)

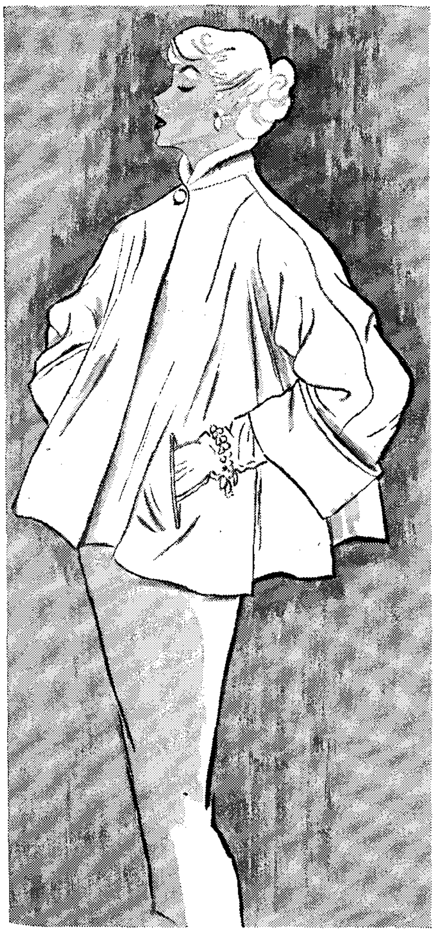
Marionettes—By the **Barton Brown Marionettes:** "A Christmas Carol." For the benefit of the John Haynes Holmes House. (Community Church, 40 E. 35th St. MU 3-4780. Thursday, Dec. 28, at 3.) . . . **Berkeley Marionettes:** "Master Skylark." (Church of the Heavenly Rest, 2 E. 90th St. AT 9-3400. Saturday, Dec. 30, at 11.) . . . **Sue Hastings Marionettes:** "Hänsel and Gretel," Saturday, Dec. 30, at 3. . . . ¶ "Jack and the Beanstalk," Sunday, Dec. 31, at 3. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. ST 3-6700.)

Dance Recital—By Pearl Primus and her company. (Kaufmann Auditorium, Y.M.H.A. Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. AT 9-9456. Sunday, Dec. 31, at 3.)

OTHER EVENTS

United Nations—Most committees and branches of the United Nations will be more or less marking time during the holidays. Prospective visitors are advised to consult their newspapers or to call the United Nations itself (FIeldstone 7-1100, Ext. 2253) or the Information Center for the United Nations (JU 2-0233) before making plans to go to Lake Success.

Hayden Planetarium—The December show is called "Star of Bethlehem." Starting on Tuesday, Jan. 2, there will be a new show, "Riddles in the Sky." (Central Park W. at 81st St. Special holiday schedule: Thursday and Friday, Dec. 28-29, at 11, 2, 3, 4, and 8:30; Saturdays at 11, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8:30; Sunday and Monday, Dec. 31-Jan. 1, at 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8:30. The regular schedule will be resumed on Tuesday, Jan. 2, with showings at 2, 3:30, and 8:30.)



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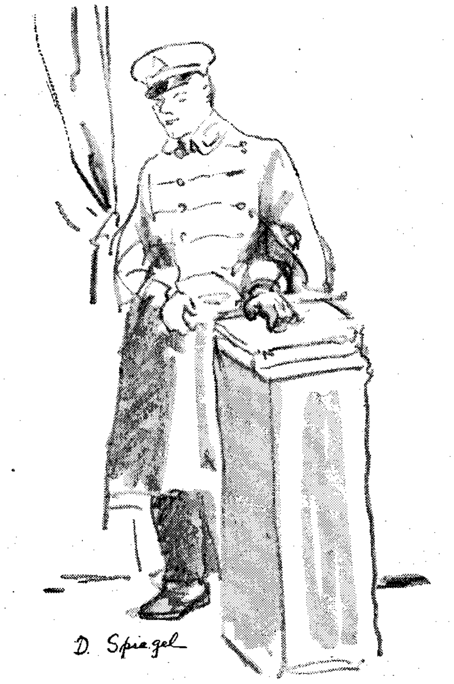
GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

MOTION PICTURES

FILMS OF MORE THAN ROUTINE INTEREST ARE DESCRIBED IN THIS SECTION



All About Eve—A witty comedy, written and directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, and dealing with some of the foibles of the theatre. Bette Davis appears to advantage playing an actress as unpredictable as, let us say, Miss Bankhead, and Anne Baxter is quite persuasive as another actress, determined to reach the top of her profession, no matter how many people she has to claw on the way up. (Beverly, 3rd Ave. at 50th, EL 5-8790; Dec. 28.... ¶ Greenwich, Greenwich Ave. at 12th, WA 9-3350; through Dec. 30.)

Bitter Rice—Life among the rice harvesters of the Po Valley, depicted in an Italian film that is long on both violence and documentary photography. Silvana Mangano is something to see as a lady too reckless to settle down to a placid bucolic career. (World, 153 W. 49th, CI 7-5747.)

Born Yesterday—Judy Holliday in the role of a junkman's paramour who learns so much about democracy in Washington that she refuses to let her coarse boy friend push her around any more. Miss Holliday is just as entertaining in this adaptation of Garson Kanin's play as she was in the original. Broderick Crawford and William Holden are fine, too. (Victoria, B'way at 46th, JU 6-0540.)

Cyrano de Bergerac—José Ferrer as Rostand's Gascon in a film so full of rodomontade that it's frequently as tiresome as a Legion rally. Mala Powers' Roxane is pretty but inept, and the rest of the cast is more or less obscured by Mr. Ferrer, who takes over the proceedings with the confidence of a cruise director. (Bijou, 209 W. 45th, CO 5-8215. Special holiday schedule: Dec. 28-29 at 10:30, 2:40, 5:30, and 8:40; Dec. 30 at 10:30, 2:40, 5:30, 8:40, and 11:30; Dec. 31 at 2:40, 5:30, and 8:40; Jan. 1 at 10:30, 2:40, 5:30, and 8:40; Jan. 2-3 at 2:40 and 8:40. Reserved seats only.)

Harvey—The invisible rabbit who pals around with a charming drunk. James Stewart does a nice job in this version of the Mary Chase comedy, and Josephine Hull lends him tremendous assistance. (Astor, B'way at 45th, JU 6-2240.)

The Jackpot—Some of the reasons why winning radio give-away shows is ill-advised, no matter how staggering the prizes may be. Neatly satiric and pleasantly enacted by James Stewart, Alan Mowbray, Barbara Hale, and James Gleason. (R.K.O. 58th St., 3rd Ave. at 58th, EL 5-3577; R.K.O. 86th St., Lexington at 86th, AT 9-8900; R.K.O. 23rd St., 8th Ave. at 23rd, CH 2-3440; Riverside, B'way at 96th, RI 9-9861; Nemo, B'way at 110th, AC 2-9406; and Coliseum, B'way at 181st, WA 7-7200; Dec. 29-Jan. 3.)

King Solomon's Mines—Through Africa on a trail first blazed by H. Rider Haggard back in 1886, and as rousing a trip as you would want to make. Besides natives, birds, beasts, and scenery, the film features Deborah Kerr and Stewart Granger. (Lexington, Lexington at 51st, PL 3-0336; Loew's 72nd St., 3rd Ave. at 72nd, BU 8-7222; Orpheum, 3rd Ave. at 86th, AT 9-4607; Sheridan, 7th Ave. at 12th, WA 9-2166; Loew's 83rd St., B'way at 83rd, TR 7-3190; and Olympia, B'way at 107th, AC 2-1019; starting Jan. 3.)

Macbeth—Orson Welles in a knock-down, drag-out bout with the Bard. Incoherent a good bit of the time, because of Mr. Welles' fondness for reading his lines with what purports to be a Scottish accent, but full of frenzied action. (Trans-Lux 60th St., Madison at 60th, PL 5-2746.)

Mister 880—A genial account of the activities of an elderly counterfeiter who turns out nothing but spurious one-dollar bills, and baffles Treasury agents for years. Edmund Gwenn is excellent as the amiable old scoundrel. (Trans-Lux Colony, 2nd Ave. at 79th, BU 8-9468; and Gracie Square, 1st Ave. at 89th, SA 2-2478; Dec. 31-Jan. 1.... ¶ York, 1st Ave. at 64th, RH 4-9350; Jan. 1-2.... ¶ Trans-Lux 85th St., Madison at 85th, BU 8-3180; starting Jan. 2.... ¶ Greenwich, Greenwich Ave. at 12th, WA 9-3350; starting Jan. 3.)

Orpheus—Jean Cocteau's lively interpretation of the Greek legend. A French film that has many droll aspects, as well as some sound performances by a cast led by Jean Marais. (55th St. Playhouse, 154 W. 55th, CO 5-9438; through Jan. 3, tentative.)

Seven Days to Noon—London under the siege of a fission expert who threatens to blow the place up if His Majesty's Government doesn't agree to stop making atomic bombs. A British film, in which a supposed evacuation of London is done with terrifying realism. The excellent cast includes Barry Jones and Olive Sloane. (Trans-Lux 52nd St., Lexington at 52nd, PL 3-2434.)

Trio—Another movie made up of Somerset Maugham stories, not as good as its predecessor, "Quartet," but distinguished by some first-rate acting. An English picture, with Jean Simmons, James Hayter, and Nigel Patrick. (Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th, PL 9-1411.)

Ways of Love—Three short films, two French and one Italian, demonstrating the respective cinematic knacks of Renoir, Pagnol, and Rossellini. Rossellini's contribution enjoys the powerful services of Anna Magnani, and all are worth seeing, litigation permitting—some sort of difficulty over licensing makes the exhibition schedule uncertain. (Paris, 4 W. 58th, MU 8-0134.)

The Winslow Boy—The story of how a father rectifies an injustice done his son at an English naval academy, told in absorbing fashion. A British picture, with Cedric Hardwicke, Robert Donat, and Margaret Leighton. (Trans-Lux Colony, 2nd Ave. at 79th, BU 8-9468; Jan. 2-3.)

REVIVALS

The Blue Angel (1930)—Marlene Dietrich as a cabaret singer and Emil Jannings as a schoolmaster. A German film. (Little Carnegie, 146 W. 57th, CI 6-1365.)

Chaplin Comedies (1917)—"The Immigrant," "The Adventurer," "The Cure," and "Easy Street." (Thalia, B'way at 95th, AC 2-3370; starting Dec. 29.)

Devil in the Flesh (1949)—A French picture concerned with the trials and cruelties of adolescent love. With Gérard Philipe and Micheline Prelle. (5th Ave. Playhouse, 5th Ave. at 12th, OR 5-9630; through Jan. 2, tentative.)

Fantasia (1940)—The Disney mixture of Bach, Beethoven, and Mickey Mouse. (8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th, GR 7-7874; through Jan. 2.)

Lifeboat (1944)—Tallulah Bankhead and various other people set adrift by Alfred Hitchcock. (Beverly, 3rd Ave. at 50th, EL 5-8790; Dec. 29-Jan. 1.)

On the Town (1949)—Gene Kelly, Vera-Ellen, and Frank Sinatra singing and dancing to some music by Leonard Bernstein. (Gracie Square, 1st Ave. at 89th, SA 2-2478; Dec. 30.)

Pinocchio (1940)—A full-length Disney cartoon, with Figaro the Cat and Cleo the Goldfish, among others. (Criterion, B'way at 44th, LU 2-1796; through Dec. 29.)

Tillie's Punctured Romance (1914)—An old one, with Marie Dressler and Charlie Chaplin. (Trans-Lux Colony, 2nd Ave. at 79th, BU 8-9468; Jan. 2-3.)

Museum of Modern Art Film Library—Through Dec. 31, showings at 3 and 5:30: "King Kong" (1933), with Fay Wray and Bruce Cabot.... ¶ Starting Jan. 1, showings at 3: "The Thief of Bagdad" (1924), with Douglas Fairbanks and Anna May Wong. (A limited number of reservations are available, but only to those applying for them in person at the Museum, 11 W. 53rd, after noon on the day of the showing.)

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THE BROADWAY AREA

FILMS OF MORE THAN ROUTINE INTEREST APPEAR IN HEAVY TYPE AND ARE DESCRIBED IN THE SECTION ABOVE

Astor, B'way at 45th. (JU 6-2240)
HARVEY.

Bijou, 209 W. 45th. (CO 5-8215)
CYRANO DE BERGERAC.

Capitol, B'way at 51st. (JU 2-5060)
"Pagan Love Song," Esther Williams, Howard Keel.

Criterion, B'way at 44th. (LU 2-1796)
Through Dec. 29: **PINOCCHIO**, revival; and "Make Mine Music!," revival, a full-length Walt Disney film.
From Dec. 30: "Where Danger Lives," Robert Mitchum, Faith Domergue.

Globe, B'way at 46th. (JU 6-5555)
"Vendetta," Faith Domergue.

Little CinéMet, 6th Ave. at 39th. (LO 4-1141)
"Manon" (in French), Cecile Aubry.

Mayfair, 7th Ave. at 47th. (CI 5-9800)
Through Dec. 29: "Rio Grande," John Wayne, Maureen O'Hara.
From Dec. 30: "The Milkman," Jimmy Durante, Donald O'Connor.

Music Hall, 6th Ave. at 50th. (CI 6-4600)
"Kim," Errol Flynn, Dean Stockwell, Paul Lukas.

Paramount, B'way at 43rd. (LO 3-1100)
"Mr. Music," Bing Crosby, Nancy Olson, Charles Coburn.

Rivoli, B'way at 49th. (CI 7-1633)
"The Mudlark," Irene Dunne, Alec Guinness, Andrew Ray.

Roxy, 7th Ave. at 50th. (CI 7-6000)
Through Jan. 3: "For Heaven's Sake," Clifton Webb, Edmund Gwenn, Joan Bennett.

State, B'way at 45th. (LU 2-5070)
"The Flying Missile," Glenn Ford, Viveca Lindfors.

Strand, B'way at 47th. (CI 7-5900)
"The West Point Story," James Cagney, Virginia Mayo, Doris Day.

Victoria, B'way at 46th. (JU 6-0540)
BORN YESTERDAY.

World, 153 W. 49th. (CI 7-5747)
BITTER RICE (in Italian).

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GOING-
LAST CALL FOR
THESE BARGAINS!
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HENRY J. TAYLOR,
ABC Network,
every Monday evening.

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They'll buy sparkling style, spacious comfort and the durable, dependable, time-tested quality for which Buicks are famous.

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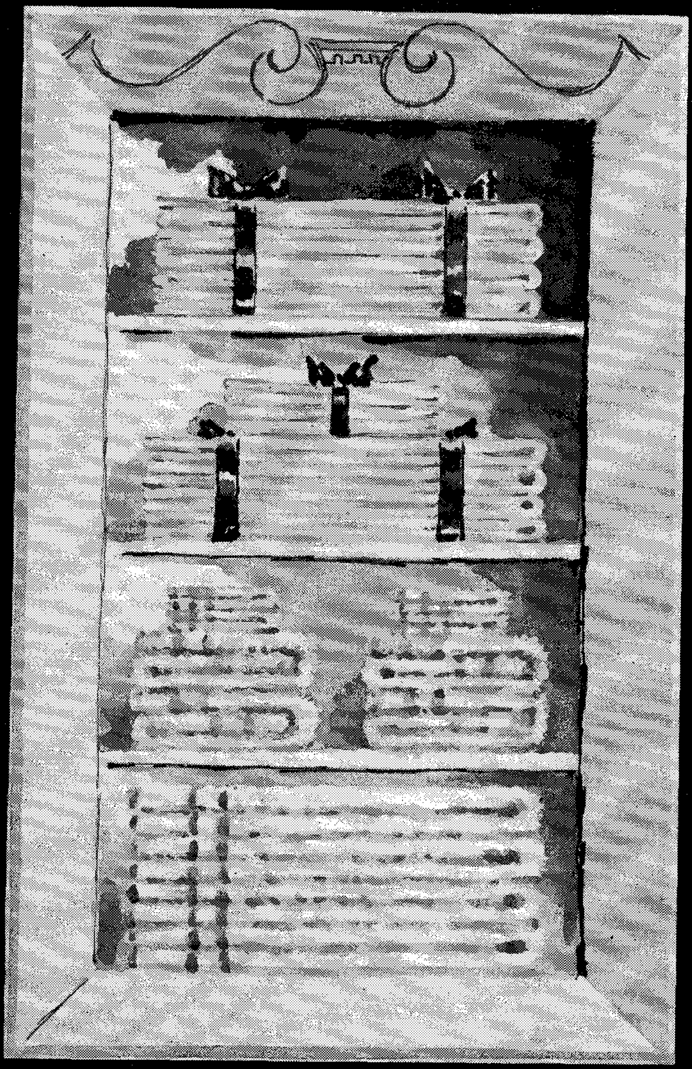

IT'S TIME

TO INVENTORY

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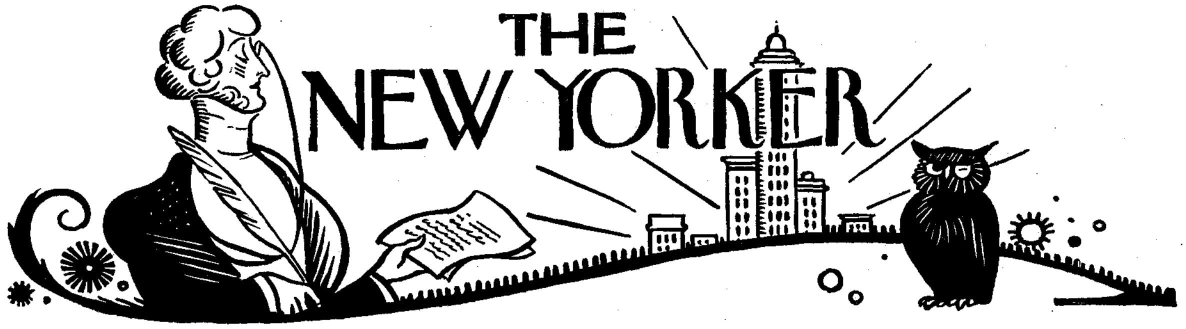
Altman's January White Sale

Fill up your shelves now . . . economically . . . in our great annual sale of household staples . . . sheets and cases, bedding, towels, linens for your table . . . all fresh and new. You'll find it a real joy to select from this profusion of Altman-quality necessities . . . so important to a well-groomed home . . . so dear to a homemaker's heart. On our fourth floor, and in our stores at East Orange, White Plains and Manhasset.

FIFTH AVENUE **B. ALTMAN & CO.** MURRAY HILL 9-7000

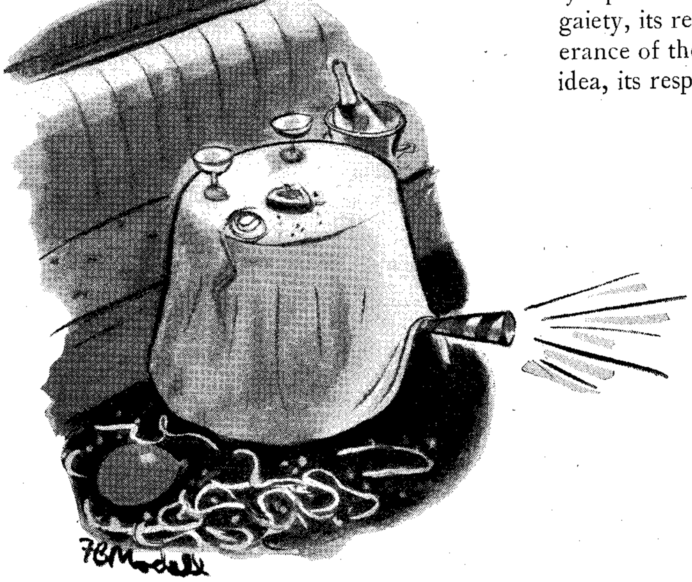


THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

OUR waiter told us he felt surprisingly well, and thought this was because he always ate the skin of fishes. He strongly recommended fish skin as tonic. But we draw our strength not from admitting the rind of fish into our stomach but from holding the fish itself firmly in mind—the protein remembrance of the cool fish-in-being, the silver meteor, perfectly adapted to its environment. It is a mistake to underestimate the sustaining power of a thing in its natural, or undigested, form. Everyone must have his own secret source of vital strength. Some eat grapes to avoid cancer, and receive strength that way. Others knit in silence, and draw electric power directly from the needles. Recently we opened a box from the country and were restored by the sharp smell of fir balsam and the flash of alderberry, as though we had received a transfusion from the great blood bank of New England. It is important that everyone feel strong and recognize the sources of his strength.

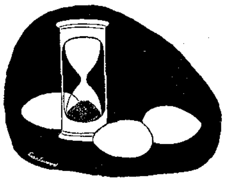
YEAR'S end and year's beginning are the same moment in time. The lack of a decent interval at midnight never fails to produce a feeling of headlong and unrelieved adventure; the moment is completely elusive, has no reality. You could strike a gong, but the waves of sound would belong fractionally either to 1950 or to 1951. The in-between is soundless. Even a kiss is impossible to manage between years, and always takes place in either the long past or the uncertain future, or extends from one to the other. At the end of the windy year 1950, we are glad to report that the young tree that took hold and grew on the stone coping outside our window, well aboveground and with only odds and ends for soil, withstood the hurricane; several nearby television antennae, with a much greater outward show of firmness, went down before the blast. It was a matter of being correctly rooted.



ON awakening the other morning, we found in our *Tribune* an article by the brothers Alsop headed "Decline of This Republic," but after reading the article we did not think the headline fitted, or that the republic is in a decline, or that such a headline serves a good purpose. The article should have been called "Queer Goings On in Senate and House Regarding Acheson," or some such. The Alsops found that the bloodthirsty activities of the Republicans indicated a decay of American politics. But it seems to us that a republic is not necessarily declining because a faction is busy trying to pry a public servant loose from his job. The governments that are in a serious decline, always, are those that do not possess either the machinery or the will to correct and alter their leadership and whose Secretaries of State are held safe against criticism. There lies the real decay. Name us the number of years a dictator has been in power and we will name you the number of years his regime has been in decline. A republic like ours may, and often does, show tremendous confusion under stress and make colossal blunders, but it is the confusion of free choice and speech, and this is not decline but steady (though tumultuous) ascent. We look for a continued ascent of this republic during the year 1951.

THE headline of decadence is repeated in press and radio every day. It is an unnecessary additional burden that we saddle ourselves with. For 1951, we recommend that publishers ask their copy desks not to overwrite and ask their commentators for great accuracy and a philosophical stance. So many things that seem new are old. The Republicans want Acheson's head because of the need for a scapegoat—one of the earliest of cravings. Politically, this is annoying and aboriginal, but not decadent. We shall presumably always have a few Early Men in Congress, as in any well-run museum.

FOR ourself, we shall resolve not to overwrite in the New Year, and to defend and exalt those principles and quirks that have carried the nation slowly up the long hill since it started: its gaiety, its resilience, its diversity, its tolerance of the divergent or the harassing idea, its respect for all men. Who is to say we are not greatly ascendant still? Because of fear, Americans have lately compromised their essential position—have published blacklists, have permitted legislative committees to presuppose what is "American," have watched them hang innocent men and women on the gallows of the newspaper headline, have winked at the meddling of congressmen in the conduct of the movies, have made the natural loyalty of the citizen ever so much more difficult by removing loyalty itself from the realm of free choice, have hinted that jobs belong chiefly to the confessed orthodox. For us, 1950 will be memorable above all other years because it was the year we once found ourself hesitating to throw something in the wastebasket, from a fleeting dread that it might be seen and misconstrued. In that one blinding moment of hesitation, the fresh air of America suddenly seemed contaminated with evil. The incident was absurd and the feeling passed, but nothing is quite absurd that happens.



Insofar as orthodoxy has gained strength, our republic has lost strength. But the loss is neither irreparable nor unusual. It is the product of war clouds—a sort of terrible mist that gathers. Luckily, many of our strongest skippers see through it. For 1951, we wish our readers health, faith, the sure eye that sees through mists, and the patience and muscle for the ascent of the most beautiful hill there is.

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INCIDENTAL INTELLIGENCE: The window display of the Model Railroad Equipment Corporation, on West Forty-fifth Street, includes, in addition to signal towers, coal bunkers, and other standard props of a miniature railroad, a church, a graveyard, a clergyman, five mourners, an open grave, and a casket.

Pearson's Windfall

THANKS to a session in the Yale Club bar, we are in a position to report that success has not changed the way of life of Frederick S. Pearson II, Yale '34, collector, selector, and in some instances originator of the forty-odd bilingual puns that, with Richard Taylor illustrations, form the corpus of the best-seller "Fractured French." "Anyone could have done it," Mr. Pearson said, waving aside a dish of salted peanuts we shoved toward him, "but, happily, no one else did. Except for an increase in my mail, and my election as an honorary member of the International Mark Twain Society, I am going along much as before." Mr. Pearson, a large, well-dressed man of thirty-eight, got interested in fractured-Frenchiana twelve years ago, when he swapped examples with Harry Bull, the editor of *Town & Country*, which was running them under the title "Free French" at the time. "People used to swap them, in a sort of game, at parties," Pearson said. "Then the thing dropped out completely. A couple of years ago, there was a revival. I love any sort of horrible pun, especially ones involving French, and friends made a point of telling them to me, and sometimes even writing them to me. Roland Young told me several new ones at lunch at the Coffee House Club."

It was at this club, about a year ago, that the idea of the book originated. Pearson was having cocktails with Lowell Pratt, of the sports-book publishing firm of A. S. Barnes & Co., and others, and after listening to Pearson regale those present with some of his latest finds, Pratt said, "Why don't you get up a book of them?" "So I typed out a number of samples, and last spring I took them to Lee Barker, the executive editor of Doubleday's," Pearson told us. "We jockeyed happily back and forth for a while, and he gave me a contract and an advance that enabled me to make a deal with Taylor to do the drawings." The rest is history—fifty-one thousand copies sold to date, and subsidiary rights taken over by manufacturers of china ashtrays, wooden trays, coasters, glasses, and paper napkins, each and every one to be decorated with an illustrated pun from the book. The trays have for some weeks been on sale at Saks, Bendel, and Lewis & Conger, and a hundred other stores will have them soon. The rest of the articles will come along later. In accordance with a complicated arrangement between Pearson, Doubleday, and Taylor, Pearson stands to make 1.875 cents on each wooden tray sold, .547 cents on each china ashtray, .391 cents on each coaster, and .777 cents on each glass. Fractured-French sweatshirts for girls are in the offing. However small Pearson's royalties on the subsidiary rights may sound, they give him, he says, a cozy, mass-production feeling.

Pearson, who is working with Taylor on a second book, "Compound Fractured French," for May publication, was born in New York, the son and grandson of engineering financiers. His grandfather, for whom he was named, was president of the Pearson Engineering Corporation and the Barcelona Traction, Light & Power Co., Ltd., and had public-utility interests in Mexico and Brazil. He and his wife went down on the Lusitania. Pearson grew up on the south shore of Long Island and sailed a lot on Great South Bay. At Yale, he arranged his curriculum to provide four-day weekends in Manhattan. Subsequently, he worked on some Westchester papers, on *Country Life* and *American Home*, and for the publishing house of Putnam. He does most of his current research at the Coffee House, Yale, and Dutch Treat Clubs, with occasional recourse to French dictionaries and week-end house-parties. He is at home in French, as a result of frequent trips abroad when he was a child. His mail is full of fractured-French suggestions, mostly unprintable. "Heard a good one the other day," he said. " '*Dumas fils*—Take me to the chiropodist.' I also like '*affaire de cœur*—puppy love.' People sometimes give me new versions of old ones. A girl called me up and said that '*mise en scène*,' which I rendered as 'mice in the river' in my book, might better be 'Ah's crazy,' or 'Me's insane.' A different switch. And a man from Hewlett, who said he'd been in my uncle's class at Yale, 1914, happily sent me '*Voici la jolie vieille dame qui approchait quarante ans*,' or 'Here's the jolly vile dame who's approaching Quarantine.' That's a little tough to illustrate, but we may try it." The tray manufacturers have found that some of the book's puns are too risqué for certain stores, even though the *really* spicy ones are being used only on the china ashtrays. For some reason, people accept spicier things on ashtrays than on wooden trays.

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WEEKLY count of illegal parking of automobiles on a couple of no-parking blocks:

Blocks inspected: Fifty-first Street from Fifth to Seventh Avenues.

Time of inspection: 2:30 to 2:55 P.M., last Friday.

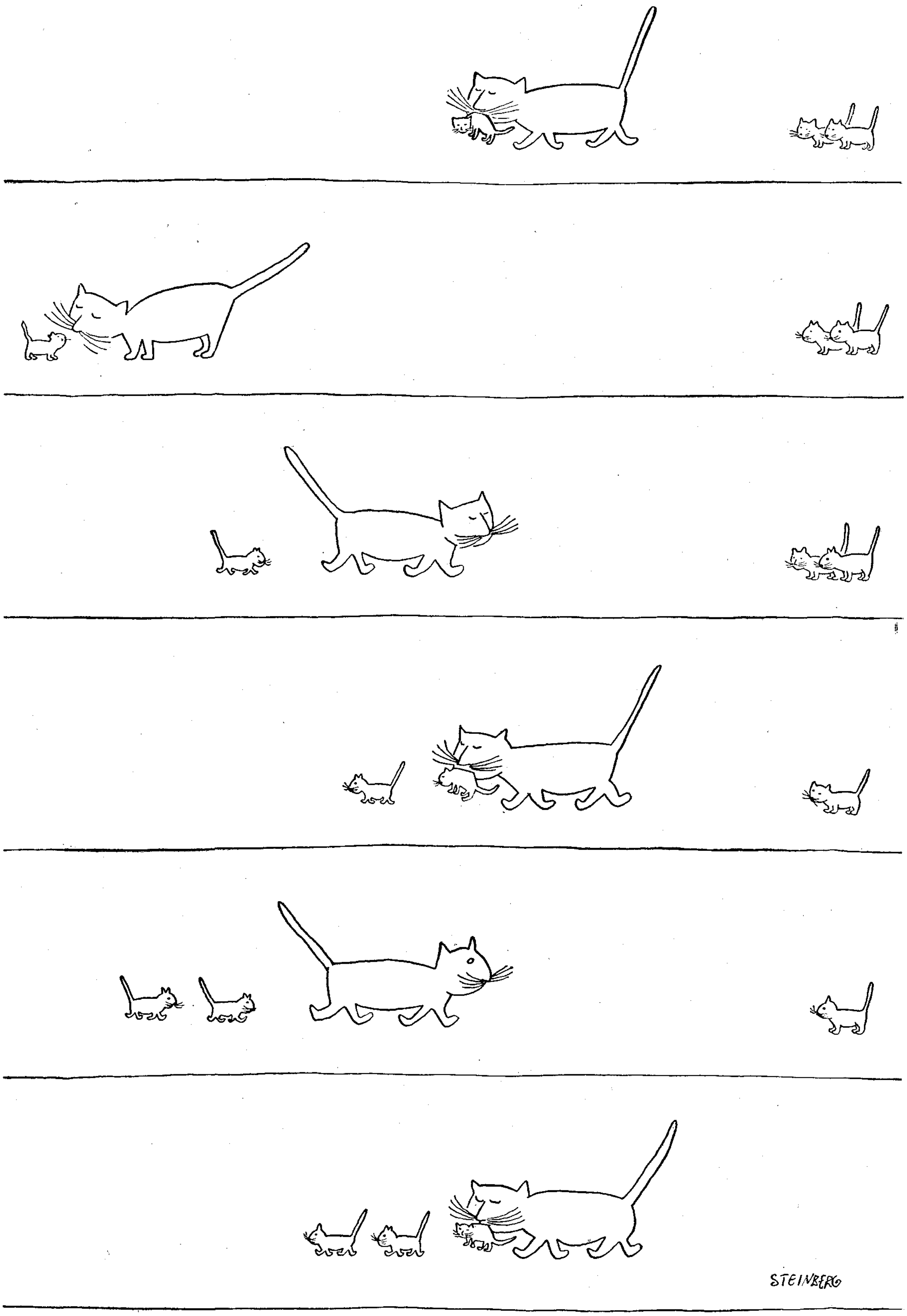
Number of cars illegally parked: 43.

Good Tippers

WE ran a piece last week about the Russian colony in Glen Cove; this week, we submit a small report on the Chinese party that recently made its dispiriting appearance at the United Nations headquarters. The delegation, which was made up of seven men and two women, occupied a six-room suite and four nearby bedrooms at the Waldorf during their stay of twenty-six days, and were guarded night and day by a four-man detail from the Special Service Bureau of the Police Department. Like their Soviet colleagues, the Chinese Communists seemed to get a big kick out of American shops. They went on several buying sprees, using two limousines placed at their disposal by the United Nations. The chauffeur of one of the cars told us that his clients were extremely reserved in the beginning but warmed up quickly to him and his fellow-driver, and to the detectives assigned to them. One of the first Chinese requests was to be driven down to Wall Street. It turned out that this was not to investigate at first hand the seat of capitalistic evil but to get some expense money out of a bank down there. The Chinese spent several evenings at the Russian Consulate, on Park Avenue, and an evening at Sir Benegal Rau's residence, at Fifth and Sixty-third. As far as the chauffeur knows, they went to no public eating places, but on one occasion a woman member of the group asked to be driven to a Chinese restaurant. There she ordered a quantity of food, presumably for the whole crowd, and took it back.

The driver told us that all the delegates appeared to be able to speak both English and Russian except General Wu, who spoke no English. The delegation went to see the show at Radio City Music Hall. One of the detectives bought tickets in advance and the delegation, contrary to reports in the press, was taken in through a side entrance, causing no stir. The delegates' sightseeing itinerary included a couple of drives through, and strolls in, Central Park, and a Sunday spin up the West Side Highway and across the George Washington Bridge. They returned by way of Harlem and the Empire State Building, where they made the usual trip to the top. "They said that they thought the city was very beautiful," the chauffeur said, "and that they liked the people in it very much." At the end of their visit, they tipped the drivers a hundred dollars apiece.

At the Waldorf, we learned that the Chinese had made no special demands on the management. Their diet ran to omelets, chicken, rice, broccoli, occasional veal chops, and large quantities of tea. They ordered hamburger only once, and gave only one dinner; this was in honor of the Indian delegation, and at it they served such capitalistic standbys as rondelles of caviar, jumbo squab, bombe of coffee ice cream, and champagne. A local columnist had an item to the effect that the delegation insisted on having a food-taster, but a



member of the hotel staff told us that this was absolutely untrue. He said the hotel had screened all the employees who had occasion to wait on the Chinese, to make sure that they had no inordinate prejudices against them. "Some of our employees might have relatives in Korea," he said. "Actually, we weren't any too happy about taking the delegation," he continued, "but we considered it our duty. We were given to understand that it was in the best interests of the United Nations to provide the Chinese with every possible courtesy." The Chinese made more of a hit among Waldorf employees than their Russian colleagues usually do. The Russians tend to be brusque, whereas the Chinese were generally agreeable. They were also extraordinarily neat. "At the end of twenty-six days, their rooms were like bandboxes," the hotel man told us. "They even folded up wrapping paper and tucked it away." Each of the chambermaids who worked for the delegation got a tip of fifty dollars. Their gratuities, and the chauffeurs', were in greenbacks, not in silver dollars, which is what some of the bellhops were tipped with before the trip to Wall Street. All those coins were old ones, some being dated as far back as 1880.

Among the stores where the Chinese delegation made purchases were Macy's, Bloomingdale's, Rogers Peet, McCutcheon's, the Columbia University Bookstore, and several camera shops, notably the Aremac shop, at 1 East Forty-third Street. A representative of Aremac told us that the firm afterward sent a display of its stock to the Waldorf and the Chinese bought nine Leicas, nine telephoto lenses, nine tripods, nine Immarect finders, seventy-five rolls of Kodak Plus X film, and a batch of Parker fountain pens. The Columbia Bookstore people said that the Chinese showed a marked preference for books on international law, American history, foreign relations, and economics—no interest in fiction or other light reading. They bought one copy of "Witch Hunt," a study by Carey McWilliams of the techniques currently used to appraise loyalty in this country.

Easy Does It

THE yuletide recipient of a Swiss cuckoo clock has forwarded to us a copy of the instructions that accompanied it, to wit and *sic:*

ORDER OF THE USE

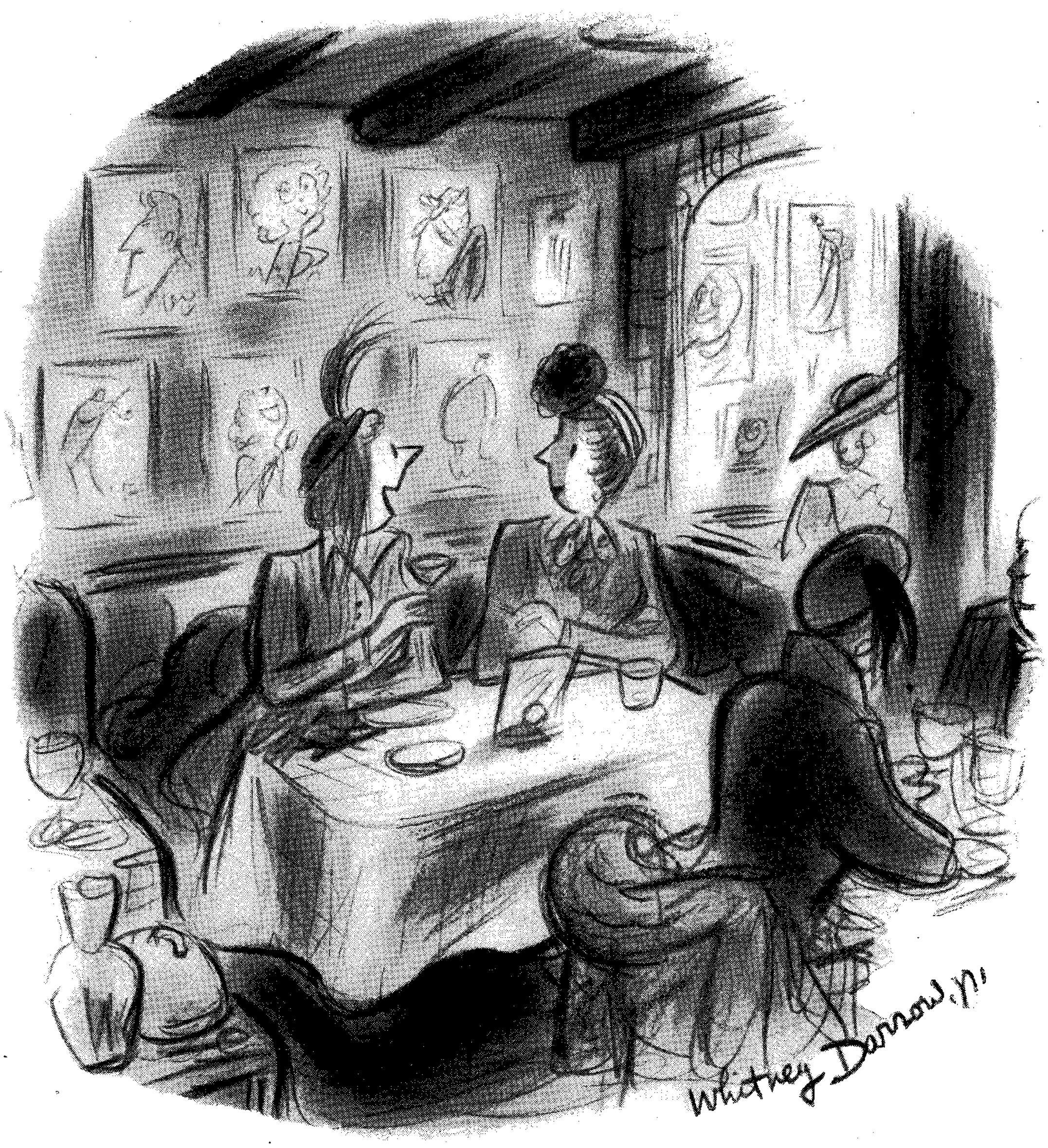
1. Before you hang up the clock, open the back of its case and take out the two crampons, cramping above the bellows of the pipe. Removing all the paper, being in the case or on its back, observe not to hurt one of the clock's wires.
2. Remove the wire, closing the little door over the dial so that the door can be opened. If the little hand has removed itself, press it at the dial.
3. When the carved-work is fastened, hang the clock up, putting the prependicular in its ring and the weights in the watch-chains, observing that the clock is making regularly pit-a-pat.
4. If the clock does not strike correctly, you must draw the ring, being right under the case, till the clock striks that hour, which the hangs show. This ring failing, take the weights away and move the great hand forward, till the clock shows that time, which it has struck at last. Never are you permitted to move the great hand back.
5. When the clock preceds, move the perpendicular toward below, when it goes after, toward above.

Within forty-eight hours, our man had the thing going pit-a-pat as regularly as you please.

DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION
B. Wiseman

New Team

REX HARRISON and Lilli Palmer, a married couple in real life who, as an unmarried couple in "Bell, Book and Candle" do a vigorous job of lovemaking six nights and two afternoons a week, received us the other noon in the living room of their Gracie Square apartment, surrounded by books and pictures, the latter including a Vlaminck windmill over the fireplace, an Utrillo, a Derain, and a Grandma Moses. Our primary mission was to find out how they feel about their Luntlike activities. "The team wasn't planned originally," said Miss Palmer, as tempting a sorceress offstage as she is on. "I had contracted for the part last March, and a few months later, when two plays Rex had been considering fell through, he said, 'Let's do it together.' We thought it would be fun. We'd been in a play together before, but never as co-stars." "It's been a *lot* of fun," said Mr. Harrison, elegant in pajamas and dressing gown, and, as he invited us to note, newly shaved. "We've been enjoying it immensely. We want to go on with it." "You remember the opening of the second scene, when we're lying together on the sofa?" Miss Palmer asked us. "Well, one night we'd had a small altercation just before the curtain went up on this, and I couldn't help giggling as we lay there making love." "I'm afraid we both giggled like hell," said Mr. H. "I hope the audience didn't notice it." He observed that love scenes on the stage are simply part of the job. "They don't mean anything physically," he said. "You're too concentrated on technical things." Miss Palmer gave him a quizzical look. "It's easier from the word 'go' if it's your own husband," she said. "There are no psychological barriers."



"It's lucky I spent Rud's bonus in advance this year. He didn't get one."

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"We really do kiss each other," said Mr. Harrison hastily. "You don't always on the stage, of course—you can fake it." He said they hoped to co-star in other plays in the future, and added, "But we don't plan to *only* do it. It limits the field so tremendously, and there are other things we each want to do. It does give one a kind of sense of security, though." Miss Palmer gave him a more favorable look.

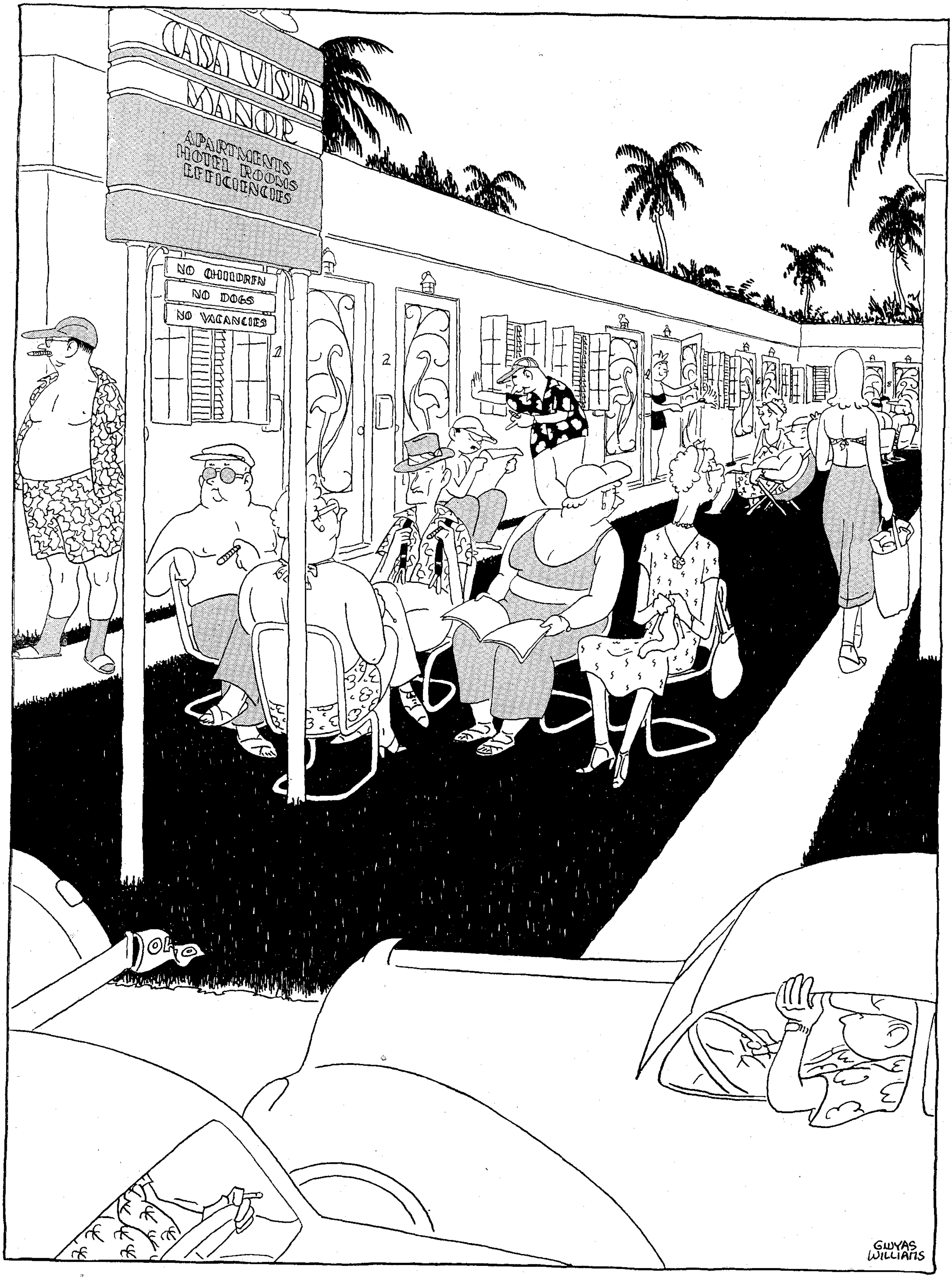
Harrison, who is forty-two, was born in England, a descendant of Edmund Kean, the actor, and a long line of clergymen, including the first Baptist missionary ever to go to India. He joined a Liverpool repertory company when he was seventeen, appeared in London when he was twenty-two, and later gravitated to Broadway and Hollywood. Miss Palmer, who is thirty-six, was born Lilli Maria Peiser, in Posen, Germany, the daughter of a surgeon. "My father had two daughters and no son, and wanted me to be a surgeon, too," she said. "When I was three, he took me to his private clinic to help entertain the patients." By the time Miss Palmer was four, she had resolved not to become a surgeon. She learned French and English from governesses. In her late teens and early twenties, she sang in several Paris night clubs with her sister, who was older. English repertory and touring companies followed. She and Harrison met while they were playing Birmingham in different road shows. The next year, they both appeared in S. N. Behrman's "No Time for Comedy"—he in the lead, she in a supporting role. He was in uniform when, in 1943, he and Miss Palmer were married. The year before, he had joined the R.A.F. Volunteer Reserve, as a flight-control officer. "When the night raids on Berlin started," he said, "I helped get the lame planes home. We used all kinds of lighting, and radar beams."

The Harrisons hope to divide their time between New York, London, and Hollywood. "New York is infinitely more enthusiastic than London," Harrison said. "The New York critics use adjectives that I don't think the London critics know exist. But it's much cheaper to put a play on in London, and it's possible to have a medium success, one that may run two or three months. Here you're a hit or you're off." "Two and a half hours doesn't seem very strenuous to the public," said Miss Palmer, "but your whole day is geared down to eight-thirty, which is kind of a bore. Actors used to be able to take their work lightheartedly, but there's no such thing as a casual attitude toward the stage today. It's too tightly geared. And you hang on to success tightly. It's so rare."

We told Mr. Harrison we admired his suits in the current show, and he said his tailors are Lesley & Roberts, of George Street. "A very refined, elderly firm," said Miss Palmer. "Rex has been going there for a long time. One day, David Niven went in to have a suit made, and Mr. Lesley said, rather dejectedly, 'Mr. Harrison was just in. He ordered a prison suit.' " "For the film of Galsworthy's 'Escape,' " said Mr. H. "I needed a striped convict suit, and I knew Lesley & Roberts would give it the right drape."

Logical

A LADY whose husband is a member of the United Nations Secretariat told a friend about his being given an afternoon off to do his Christmas shopping. "He's not supposed to say anything about it," she said, "because his boss doesn't want the people in the other divisions to know he got it. You see, he's in the Human Rights Division."


CASA VISTA MANOR
APARTMENTS
HOTEL ROOMS
EFFICIENCIES
NO CHILDREN
NO DOGS
NO VACANCIES
1
2
GLUYAS WILLIAMS

AMERICA'S PLAYGROUNDS

Apartments for the Season, Florida

LIVE AND LEARN

YOU can know a person for years and not know what goes on inside him, and then again you may meet a stranger and find yourself suddenly involved in his deepest problems. I went to the same dentist for over a decade, for instance, before I learned that his wife was a confirmed alcoholic, and even then the discovery was made by accident.

I am one of those people whose fear of dentists is such that, once having found one they think they can trust, they will go to any lengths to avoid a change, and the one that I clung to in this case was a New Haven man, whom I had gone to when I was in college and had kept on going to, faithfully, though at some inconvenience, afterward. I liked him, and as he'd been my older brother's dentist as well, we had a certain friendliness in our relations. In a way, he was like a family doctor. His name was Sydney Howard, though he was, of course, not related to the playwright. He was a small, round-faced, rather taciturn man, with clear, pale-blue eyes behind rimless spectacles, and a brush-out mustache, very quick and delicate in his movements, and the first time I visited him he was, I should imagine, in his forties—or, as it seemed to me then, in my youthful eagerness to get on into life, just about the right age for a man to be.

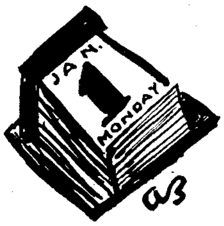
But as time went on, and I graduated from college, took a job in New York, and got married, and so on, things changed. We were aging at an equal rate, of course, but the passage of years had a different effect on us, and there is a certain wistfulness about my recollections of him now because of this; I think it was he who first made me realize that there is a peak in men's lives, and that after passing it they deteriorate more and more rapidly. His office remained the same—brown, with heavy, old-fashioned furnishings, rather close in atmosphere—but the man inside it grew steadily paler, frailer.

First his mustache went gray and then his hair, and while his hair was graying, his mustache turned white. And by that sad process that often accompanies advancing age, his cheeks shrank and at the same time grew jowlier. It got so that each time I went up there to see him, at my regular six-month intervals, I would look with a curious fascination to see what new tidal marks I could note of his slow engulfment by the years.

I got, too, the impression that the number of his patients was falling off; certainly, the last couple of years that I saw him, he had dispensed with his receptionist. But his touch remained as steady as ever and his manner as gentle, which I liked, and since I also enjoyed the trip up—which meant a day off from work at the office, and a plunge instead into the lazier, quieter, and, for me at least, always faintly nostalgic atmosphere of New Haven—I continued to visit him. In the end, I discovered it wasn't age alone that ravaged him. For there was one day when I arrived (with a hangover, incidentally; there had been a party the night before) and found his office door shut and locked.

This surprised me, for he had always been very punctilious about his appointments, but, as it turned out, I hadn't very long to wait. I had, in fact, only had time to take a turn or two up and down the corridor, wondering what to do next, before I saw him hurrying toward me from the elevator. So we went in together through the empty waiting room, he quieter than usual and a bit abstracted, and I nervous, and while I got into the chair, he put on his white coat, washed his hands, and got together his instruments.

It gave a curious intimacy to the ritual, and as he'd been apologizing for his lateness, I made some remark, purportedly humorous, that, if anything, I was glad of the respite. I had a fairly severe hangover, I told him, and I gave him some details of the previous evening. The effect was quite different from what I had expected. He'd been just approaching me at the moment, with his little dentist's mirror in his hand and, no doubt, the words "Open, please" already forming on his lips. But now he stopped and stared at me.



"My God! Does everybody drink now?" he exclaimed, and then—I can still see the odd movement he made, in the old office—he pulled himself up so sharply that he seemed to lean physically backward with the effort. "I'm sorry," he said stiffly, and brought his mirror to bear again. "I should never have said that. Open, please."

The visit throughout was a strange one. Half mechanically, he went through the fixed routine—the arranging of the rubber bib around my neck, the mixing of the abrasive powder, the amassing of the various little picks and packets of scouring discs, and so on. (About all my teeth needed in those days was a cleaning.) But the remark he had made still troubled him; he felt it called for an explanation, and his efforts to explain it led him ever into deeper confusion.

"Whether *you* drink or not is no concern of mine," he said. He was inspecting my back molars with the mirror at the time. "No, I didn't mean that, either," he added. "I'd of course be concerned if you—you or anyone . . ." He didn't finish the sentence. He put down the mirror and took up a pick. I winced. "But I suppose you drink normally," he said, and then he looked directly at me. "I took my wife to a sanatorium this morning—not for the first time, either—for drunkenness. She drinks," he added, unnecessarily. He still held the instrument poised. "She drinks steadily, uncontrollably. She drinks all the time." Then he turned his attention to my teeth again.

I was sympathetic, of course, but beneath my interest there was a layer of embarrassed resentment—was the fellow lecturing me, or what?—and beneath that a certain apprehension, for it seemed to me that he was almost too distracted to be able to do his work properly. It turned out that his deepest trouble was a feeling of personal guilt in the matter. She had been pretty, he said, and spirited—"she was the gayest thing"—and the question was now: Was it his fault that she had changed? Was he to blame?

"Maybe I was too serious for her," he said. "Or perhaps— There's a difference in age." By that time, I was too worried about myself—after all, wasn't it his own problem?—to want to listen further, and I seized the first chance to suggest that perhaps this was a bad time for me to have come; maybe if I came up again later, it would be better. He stopped and looked at me—in an odd way, as if he hadn't really noticed who I was till then. "Yes," he said. "Yes, perhaps. As you wish. Your teeth are excellent." And he stood silently watching me as I put on my coat and adjusted it, and I went out the door.

That was the last time I saw him, for when I wrote him some six months later, dutifully asking for an appointment, my letter was returned.

THEN there was that time on the bus, crossing over from New Hampshire into Vermont. That was in

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the winter, and I had been skiing; I had been at North Conway for a couple of days, but the slopes had been icy there, and rather than hang around waiting for the weather to change, I decided to go over to Pico, near Rutland, to try my luck there.

The easiest way to do that was by bus—up through Crawford Notch to St. Johnsbury, Vermont, and then over to Barre, and on down to Rutland—and it turned out to be a very pleasant journey. It's all mountain country; for a while we had Mount Washington—white as a wedding cake, with its eternal thin plume of snow blowing out with the wind from the summit—almost constantly in view as we circled behind it, and the trees along the road stood deep in snow, frosty-branched and glittering icily wherever the sun touched them, all the way to the Notch and beyond. There were few towns, and such as there were were mainly mere crossroads—a few houses, a church, a garage, perhaps, and a general store with great mounds of shovelled-up snow piled on either side of its steps, before which the bus would honk its horn and pause briefly, the smoke from its exhaust swirling whitely, while such passengers as there might be got on or off.

They were local people, going short distances, mostly, so the character of our cargo kept constantly changing slightly. For a while, I had a fat, red-cheeked Polish woman in a man's reefer in the seat beside me, then a boy of about ten or eleven, who leaned past me and peered out the window anxiously till the bus reached his destination, and then, after him, a gaunt-featured, feeble old man in a rusty-black overcoat and a furred cap with earlaps. Just before St. Johnsbury, I had a red-headed Irish girl in a white tam-o'-shanter for a companion, one of a group of workers, mostly women, who invaded the bus at a low-roofed brick factory by the roadside.

I changed buses at St. Johnsbury and again at Barre, and it was shortly after that, on the outskirts of some nameless small town, that the little Italian got on. It had grown dark by then, and I couldn't see him clearly. The bus's headlights were on, shining bafflingly bright against the snowy roadway confronting them, but the interior we rode in was dim, and the only impression I got was of someone short and squat and solid—and, it soon turned out, extremely restless—in the seat at my side. Finally, he spoke.

"I got the money, all right," he said suddenly. "All I got to do is show my identification." He had not so much an Italian accent as a New York one, and his face, when I turned to look at him—for there was no one he could be speaking to but me—was plump and smooth-skinned and, despite the fact that he seemed to be about fifty, curiously innocent.

"Your identification?" I said.

"That's right. It was in the letter," he said. "It's my brudder's," he went on, as if that explained everything. "And no matter what *he* says, I'm gonna do what my brudder wanted me to. Wouldn't you?"

I could tell from the way he accented the pronoun that some new person had come into the conversation, but beyond that I was completely at sea. "Well—" I began, but he interrupted.

"He says he'll moider me," he remarked, and sat back for a moment and smiled at me almost proudly, as if the fact that he had been so gravely threatened testified to his own importance. Then he nodded his head. "Let him try. I got a stubborn streak in me, too, y'know."

The bus had been grinding its way up a long, steep grade in low gear. Now, at the top, the driver shifted into high and we started down the other side, gaining speed immediately. Briefly, now and then, I heard a "whoosh" from the rear as he touched the air brakes. "Some mean curves around here," my companion said complacently, and sat silent for a while. Then he started twisting in his seat again. "But when *she* says 'Good riddance'— That's all she said, 'Good riddance.'" He stopped and stared at me with an oddly mournful look behind his smile. "Well, the thing is you gotta live and learn. I guess that's the way it is, don't you?"

He was anxious to talk, and by now I was interested enough to want to hear more. It turned out to be a rather complicated involvement. The money he was talking about was his brother's "burial" insurance, a six-hundred-dollar policy, of which he had been named beneficiary, with the understanding that he would use the proceeds to provide a decent funeral. It had been taken out through some Italian banking house in New York, and, his brother just having died, alone, in the city, my companion now was on his way to apply for it, and also to arrange for the burial—which, I gathered, was intended to include the participation of his brother's fraternal order, a grand massing of friends and relatives, and so on.

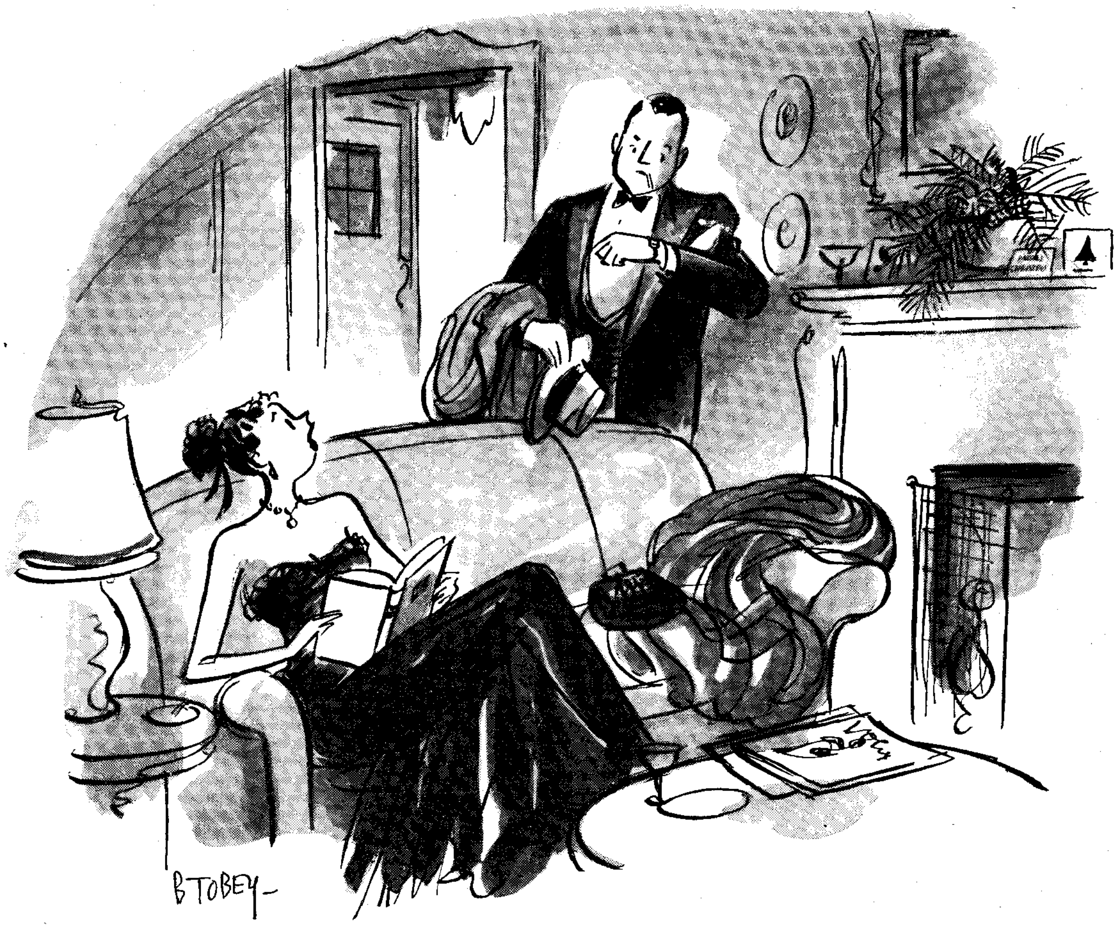
The trouble was that *she* and *he* were against all this. I never did learn her name, but his was Marty, and they were, respectively, his wife and his partner in a little bar-restaurant in the town where he had got on. Their point of view was brutally practical. "What you worried about him for? He's dead," they argued. "What's he care what kind of funeral you give him?" Get him buried as cheaply as possible, they maintained ("Bring him up here. We'll bury him," *he* had said, and the little Italian, reciting it, nodded his head sadly. "Yeah, I know. Someplace out in the fields"), and then use the balance of the money for fixing up the restaurant, where it would do some good.

"Neon lights, they want now, and put in a dance floor," my companion complained. "They want to make it a hot spot. And *he*, already *he's* got it so nobody but the tough guys come, the kind *he* runs around with. I don't like that, Mister. I don't like it."

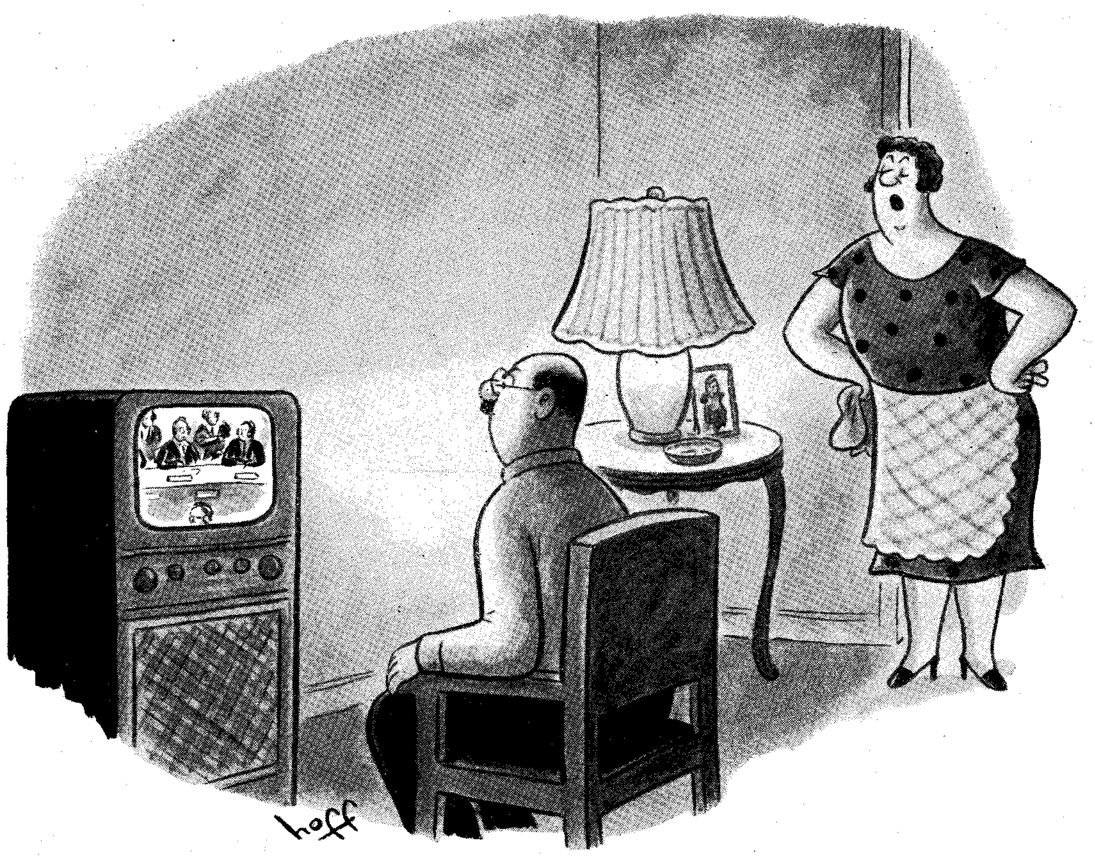
The point was that his wife, apparently, did. There had been violent arguments before he left, and even before the brother had died, and in the course of these it had come out that she sided with Marty— "all the way," my friend said, hinting delicately—and, if it came to the issue, had no intention of changing. He himself could go or stay, and if he went, it would be good riddance. But if he came back, it must be with a sizable share of the money. "He says he'll moider me if I don't," the little man repeated. "Well, I ain't scared of that," and as I was about to laugh at the ridiculousness of the threat, he added, with a matter-of-factness that chilled me a little, "But I guess nobody likes to get their arm broke, or something."

Well, there he was with his problem, and so, for a while, vicariously, was I, for he seemed to be trusting enough, or bewildered, to leave the whole thing up to me—or, indeed, to anyone who would talk to him sympathetically. While the bus ground on, slowly up, swiftly down, swerving sometimes to avoid an oncoming car, following its fixed routine, we discussed the problem. The trouble was I had no quick solution to give him, and such tentative ones as I offered he rejected.

He shouldn't worry about his partner's threats, I suggested; he could go to the State Police about that. But— "The State Police!" he cried. "I don't want no trouble with them. They got their eye on the place already." And then, getting my meaning better: "Anyway, what'd I tell them? He ain't done nothing till he does it, has he? Anyhow," he went on, after a moment, "I'd be more scared of her than him. He *talks* a lot, but she *does* things." He had an odd little deprecating smile as he said it—made up partly, I think, of shyness, as if he wanted to minimize his predicament, and partly of pure fatalism—and for an instant, as I looked at him, I seemed to see him more clearly than before, almost clearly enough to foresee the way he might act, and be acted upon, in the future. You're the kind who gets poisoned, I thought; the kind whose very gentleness leads you to leave solutions up to the others, and whose



"For heaven's sake, Henry, there's loads of time. We wouldn't want them to think we haven't been to another party first."



"Point of order, Sir Gladwyn. Dinner's ready."

stubbornness makes you hang on and wait, unprotestingly, to see what the solution may be.

The thing was that he had to go back, of course. A man can't leave his whole life behind him on account of a menace as insubstantial as this was. And he was obviously not the sort of man to send his wife and her lover packing. In the end, I found myself arguing, a bit weakly perhaps, on *their* side. One must think of the living, I told him; once you went past a decent minimum, there was no sense in spending money on funerals. At that, all his stubbornness came to the surface, and he looked at me exasperatedly, as if I were a child and he'd have to explain things all over. "But it's me brudder's," he protested. "He's the one to say how I'm to spend it."

We were getting close to Rutland, starting on the long, winding grade that leads down from the ridges just east of the city. There were mountains all around us in the darkness, I knew—Pico Peak among them, where I hoped to be skiing tomorrow—and even as he talked I couldn't help glancing out of the window occasionally, trying to estimate what the character of the snow was like. It was hard to tell much as it flowed past under the flare of the bus lights, but, from what I saw, it looked fairly promising. I was beginning to feel, too, that maybe I was making too much out of little—and if I wasn't, then, damn it, the man ought to be able to get out of his jam himself.

"Well," I said, "I guess you'll just have to see how things work out." He grinned and, as usual a bit inconsecutively, replied. "Yeah. We live and learn, don't we? That's life." Then the bus took a turn and we were among houses. We passed a church, and a little park, and then a few lighted shops appeared on either side of us. We were in Rutland, and as I wanted to get off well short of the terminus, at the stop in front of the Berwick Hotel, I began getting my things together. I got my suitcase down from the rack overhead and went up to the door. A couple of minutes later, as the driver and I were pulling my skis from the luggage compartment outside and stacking them, I glanced up and saw the little man staring down at me, with that odd, wistful, stubborn smile I had noticed before. Though I waved and made a mouth-shaping of the words "Good luck," I felt suddenly contrite and depressed, as if somehow I had failed him. You'll go down to the city, I thought, and give your brother the funeral he wanted. And you'll go back to your wife and the restaurant, and hang on—and what happens to you after that will depend on what *their* own particular drives and compulsions impel them to. For a moment, I had a feeling that I ought to stop him, that there was still something I could do. Then the bus started off down the street, and I went into the hotel to register. As I'd hoped, the skiing next day turned out to be excellent.

OR those men you encounter occasionally in late bars or in all-night lunchrooms—not drunk, necessarily, but who have come at that moment to the end of their tether—who turn suddenly agonized faces on you and impale you with the stories of their lives. . . . I never saw my little bus companion again, though I have frequently wondered about him. But I discovered what happened to Dr. Howard when, a year or so after that last visit, I was doing some office research in New Haven and, feeling curious, went around to his old office building and made some inquiries. Later on, I read the whole story in the newspaper files. He had shot his wife and then himself, apparently soon after her return from the sanatorium, and as I read the news item—"Double Tragedy," the *Register* had headlined it—I saw him again, standing silent in his office, watching me as I left, and had an odd feeling that in some way I had failed him. But then, as the fellow in the bus said, that's life, and you live and learn. —ROBERT M. COATES

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Heard on a murder mystery program: "Call in a ber-TILL-yun expert and have the room checked for fingerprints." The word used is Bertillon, short for Bertillon system, a method of identifying persons from physical measurements, fingerprints, etc. The system was named for its inventor, the French criminologist, Alphonse Bertillon. The French pronunciation is: bair-tee-YAW(N). The correct English pronunciation is: PEHR-i-m'nt.—*Arizona Republic.*

Or just plain Spearmint.

THE ANTIQUARY

ON the bright Sunday mornings of my childhood, my father and I would start off up the steep village street toward the moor, and sometimes, if Father had been careless about consulting his watch, we would find ourselves caught up in the little procession of people going to the Anglican church. The sight of these worshippers always irritated Father. Like so many of the textile workers in northern England, he was a dissenter in every conceivable religious and political sense, but when I asked him why he never went to the Nonconformist chapel with the rest of the family, he surprised me by saying that he had gone there every Sunday till he was twenty-one, and that if I did as much, I should probably turn out to be a good woman. I nearly always missed the morning service at chapel, but I dutifully attended the afternoon Sunday school, so I knew I was sure of a place in Heaven. Although I had never been inside the church, I nevertheless admired its gray stone walls, its massive tower, and its stained-glass windows, and wished that our chapel, which was as grim and graceless as the mills in the valley, possessed the same dignity and a similar clock tower.

The two congregations were as different as the buildings. The people with money—the millowner, the lawyer, the doctor, and the more prosperous shopkeepers—were all supporters of the Church of England, and the handful of factory workers who sat behind them in the old oak pews were the meekest characters in the village. Sometimes, as Father and I passed the churchyard gate, the black automobile of Father's employer would draw up and the millowner himself would step out.

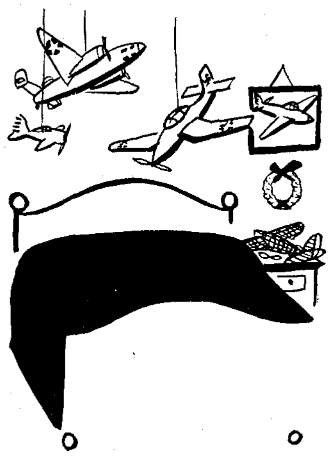
"How d'ye do?" Father would say, giving him a curt nod and never waiting a second to hear how he did. Once, he added in an aside to me, "Look at them 'at goes to church—rich folk and their sackofants."

"I'm sure the word is 'sycophant,' " I said timidly, but Father said he knew what he wanted to say.

Though I knew I was expected to keep out of the church, I regarded the churchyard as a legitimate playground. The chapel graveyard wasn't to be compared with it. In the churchyard, there were tombstones of every sort from flat stones to effigies of angels and splendid marble monuments. Whatever you wanted a grave for—whether to jump over or to play house on—the churchyard had first-rate specimens. Also, there were thousands of daisies growing in the grass between the graves, and I was addicted to making daisy chains. So, naturally, I spent many summer evenings there, usually with my friends Edith Edwards and Dorothy Jones, who were also chapelgoers.

One evening, after a sharp quarrel with Edith—Dorothy was a gentle, pink-faced girl who couldn't quarrel with anybody—I started off home alone, in a rage. As I passed the church door, some perverse impulse made me open it. The place was empty, and as I looked at the oak pews, the decorated altar, and the eight stone pillars that supported the vaulted roof, my anger evaporated. I walked slowly down the stone-floored aisle. The light from the stained-glass windows was dim and soothing. The candles in their silver sconces and the huge Bible lying on the outspread wings of the gilded eagle had an awe-inspiring magnificence. I was fingering the embroidered altar cloth when I heard a side door open, and with the smooth, elastic stride of an athlete the vicar came toward me.

He had been in the village for only six months, but I had often seen him in the steep main street. Instead of being short-legged, plump, and ruddy, as an English clergyman should be, he was immensely tall and gaunt, and had a strange, foreign face. He smiled at everybody he met, but it was a flashing, jubilant exposure of teeth instead of a sedate English smile, his voice was unnecessarily loud, and his complexion had a yellowish cast. He always carried a long walking stick, not, it appeared, as an aid to walking but so that he could gaily wave it aloft whenever he met anybody he knew. I was familiar with this stick, for it was twirled at every child, chapelgoer or churchgoer; but, like the other children, I found this immense affability frightening, and I avoided the vicar if I could. Now his smiling yellow face filled me with terror.



"What are you doing here, child?" he asked.

I said I had wanted to see the inside of the church, and added defensively that I hadn't touched anything, which was a useless lie, for he had seen me stroking his altar cloth.

"Why don't you come on Sundays, then?" he asked.

"Because we're chapel," I said.

"Who's your father?" he asked, and when I told him, he said "Ah" and nodded gravely, as though he had already heard of my father and his radical opinions. Then, giving me a searching look, he added, "You needn't be afraid of me. I like children. How old are you? Eleven?"

"Yes," I said, wondering how he knew. It seemed a manifestation of uncanny powers.

"Then you're old enough to appreciate your church," he said, forgetting it wasn't my church at all. "Come this way."

I knew I was being led astray, but I followed him through a small door into the tower. Twenty feet above my head was a dark ceiling with eight circular brass plates on it, through which hung the beautifully tasselled ropes of the bells.

"Do you like church bells?" the vicar asked, and I was too afraid of him to say I thought them melancholy except when they clashed wildly for weddings. I said I liked them.

"They tell people it's time for a service," the vicar said. "So they're necessary."

He didn't seem to realize that all chapelgoers knew the time without being shouted at by tons of bronze bells. I turned away from the red, white, and blue tassels of the bell ropes and followed the vicar out of the bare tower back into the oak-filled church. He showed me the screen, the font, and the slabs of brass and marble on the floor of the aisles that indicated where distinguished citizens had been buried centuries ago, and he tried to explain the curve of the roof and the significance of the stained glass in language simple enough for me to follow. As he talked, his haggard yellow face became so winning, so tender and sympathetic, that I entirely lost my fear of him. I realized that here was a good and wise man, even if he had had the misfortune to be born a foreigner. But I was suddenly reminded that I was being a traitor to the chapel when I saw that the great oak door had opened six inches and the soft, surprised face of Dorothy Jones was peeping in.

"There's your friend looking for you," the vicar said. "Come again, child."

"WHAT ever made you go in?" Dorothy asked a few moments later, as we were standing outside the church.

"You were coming in yourself, it seems!" I said.

"I was not!" Dorothy cried indignantly. "I was just peeping. And there I catch you sidling up to the vicar and smiling like a spice puss." (A spice puss was the local name for a little sugar cat you could buy for a penny.)

"If we play in his churchyard, we have to be nice to him," I said.

"Yes, I suppose so," Dorothy said. "But just the look of him frightens me."

"He's kind," I said.

"He's foreign," Dorothy said in her sad, unaggressive voice. "My mother says he comes from South America. And his face is a funny sort of yellow."

"There's a disease that turns your face yellow," I explained. "It's called jaundice, and he's probably got it." I was anxious to defend my new acquaintance, and jaundice was obviously less objectionable than being a South American.

"Here he is!" Dorothy whispered. The vicar had come out of the church. He waved his stick at us benignly. Then he went through the side gate that connected the churchyard with his garden.

"I'd like to see inside the vicarage," Dorothy said wistfully, forgetting she had just reproached me for fraternizing with the church. "He might have a talking parrot."

I, too, was curious about the vicarage. It was a seventeenth-century house of local stone, and, apart from the Elizabethan manor, it was the only very old house in the village. Its garden was divided from the churchyard by a low stone wall, and the same elms and cypresses sheltered both. The side of the vicarage that bordered the graveyard was windowless and tarred, to defy the weather, but from almost every corner of the garden the monuments to the dead were visible. I valued the churchyard as a playground, but to sleep so near to it that one could hear the rain beating on the graves at night would have terrified me.

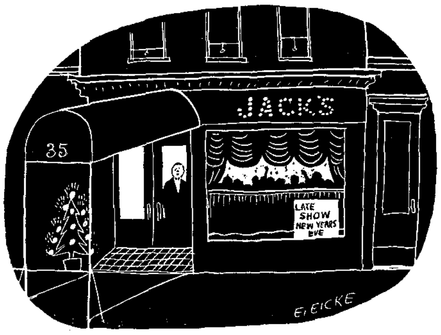
"We could go there carol-singing," I suggested. "Though Christmas is a long way off."

Dorothy pointed out that you were often obliged to stand outside the door when you went carol-singing. People gave you money but reserved their hospitality for the grownups.

"There's no other way, then," I said. "We're chapel, so we'll never even be asked to a garden party."

The chapel minister, who lived in a gaunt manse three floors high, never held a garden party. His garden, a little patch a hundred feet square, hadn't been made for such frivolities.

MY acquaintance with the vicar grew. Whenever I saw him walking up the village street as I was going shopping, I ran after him and walked alongside him. Once, when we were both going to the chemist's, which was just under the moor at the very top of the mile-long street, I asked if it was true that he had come from South America. Yes, he said, he had been raised in the Argentine. My fear of foreigners vanished; obviously, if the vicar was a foreigner, then people from other countries could be trusted, and the Argentine must be a particularly fine place. I learned from the vicar that it was a paradise filled with horses and blessed with perennial sunshine. But at eighteen the vicar had come to study in Oxford, and while he was there, his family had lost their money. How, he didn't tell me, and it seemed impolite to ask. After obtaining his degree at Oxford, he had taken holy orders and worked for years in city slums, but finally, he said, he had been glad to come to a quiet place. When I asked if he had ever been back to the Argentine, he said "Never," and added that he loved England and was proud to be a British citizen. He knew much more about our local history than I, and he told me that in the company of the Antiquarian Society he spent many Saturdays looking for Roman, Danish, and Saxon remains or examining Elizabethan houses. The people in our locality were mainly of Danish stock, he said, descendants of the Vikings; our dialect proved it. I felt


JACK'S
35
LATE SHOW NEW YEARS EVE
E. FICKE

SUBURBAN FLOWER STORE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

It is, yes, December still, the old year.
A few bowl football games are still to play;
These justify, if you like, the yellow display
Of chrysanthemums on half the counter here.
Anyhow, the chrysanthemums suggest the old year.

But tomorrow is January, start of the new,
And in January in even the upper South
The first warm sighs murmur from Spring's mouth.
It isn't unreasonable to have on view
All these jonquils, spring and yellow and new.

Yet, Lord, the Autumn I think is evil days:
"Food and life!" cry the pleasant fruits that fall;
But they hurry, hurry to mildewy death and all
The hungry cold of Winter's negative ways.
There is too much contradiction in those days.

And Spring as bad, for the world at last resigned
To the long, flat, drugging quiet of death
Is stabbed alive with the pain of first breath
Only to see the flowers, how they go on the wind;
And to that, of course, we have never been resigned.

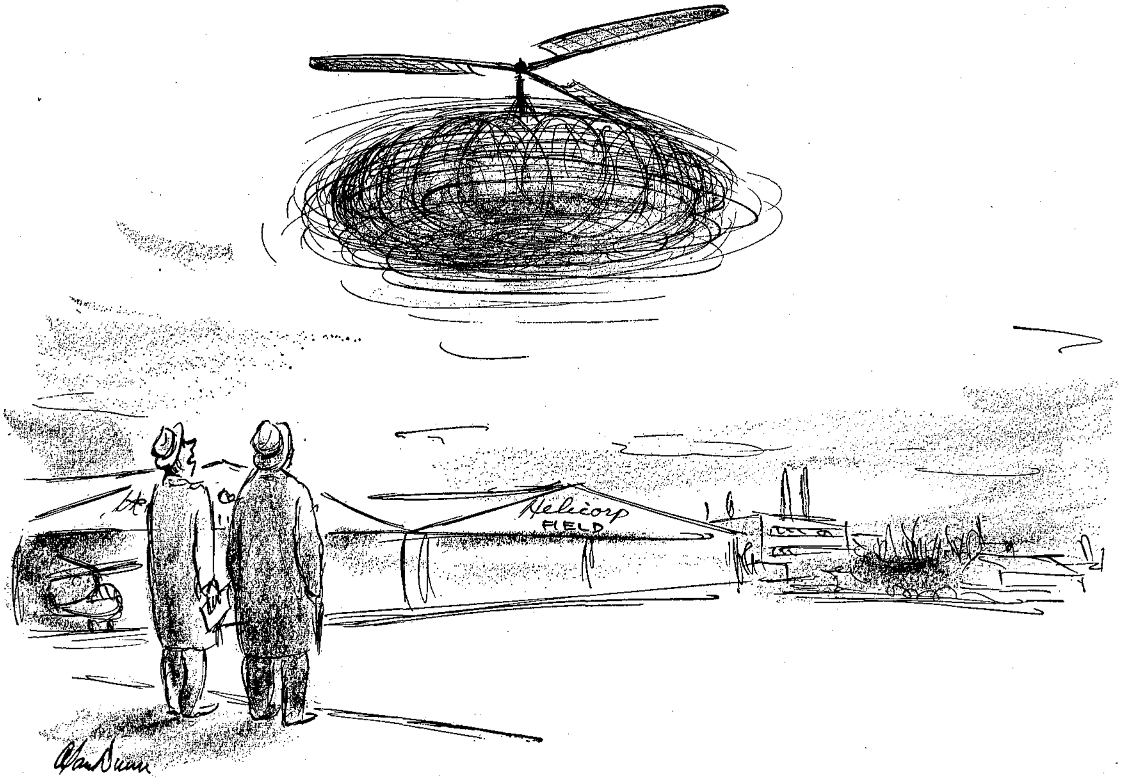
So I think it rawly unfair there be set together
These signal flowers from the days that trouble me most.
A man is entitled to his stretch of killing frost
Between the excitements of Spring and of Fall weather,
And not both meteorological griefs together!

—W. R. MOSES

• •

little pride in being a descendant of the Vikings and eagerly turned the conversation back to the Argentine, which was so much more romantic than England. Whenever we met after that, there was the same gentle conflict between the vicar's love of English history and my curiosity about South America. His interest in our games and the proper seasons for playing them seemed to me unsuitable for a grown man, especially one who had travelled so far.

Still, no matter how frequently we discussed our local history and the vicar's wonderful past, I was never invited to the vicarage. Sometimes I saw the vicar's wife in the street, but she never spoke to me. She was nearly as tall as her husband, undoubtedly English, with fading golden hair, a dreadfully shy manner, and shabby clothes. Their one servant was a bad-tempered woman from a mining area—our local girls preferred the textile mill to domestic service—and as she never mixed with the villagers, I couldn't hope to enter the vicarage by way of the kitchen.



"Hmm. Looked all right on paper."

MY chance finally came on the next New Year's Eve. On that date, many children and some adults dressed up in fancy costumes to go and "sweep the New Year in" for those householders who were willing to pay for the service with coins, cake, or homemade wine. Singing songs and sweeping the hearth with a small handbrush were the chief features of the ceremony. Logically, it should have been performed at midnight, but as this would have inconvenienced everybody, it was tacitly agreed that any time after seven in the evening would serve. My mother had refused to lend me a handbrush and had strongly discouraged the idea of going sweeping; she said it was just a fancy form of begging. Father, on the contrary, had thoroughly approved of it. It was a good old custom, he said. In his young days, the local mummers had not only dressed up, swept hearths, and sung songs; they had played "Saint George and the Turkish Knight," and in one of these accomplished troupes Father had been Saint George.

I met Edith Edwards, Dorothy Jones, and Sarah Greenwood at the churchyard gate at seven o'clock on New Year's Eve and suggested we begin at the vicarage. Edith Edwards, who was our leader and carried a little cardboard box with a slit in it, for coins, said we would do no such thing. She had blacked her face and put on her father's pants, in the hope of resembling a Negro minstrel, and she said the vicar's wife would have a fit at the sight of girls in trousers. I was wearing a Red Indian suit and a feathered headdress borrowed from our school production of "Hiawatha," but I said firmly that the vicar was my friend and would remain so even though I was wearing trousers. Dorothy Jones, who looked quite beautiful in her Aunt Emily's best black frock, nodded her gentle head and agreed that we would undoubtedly be admitted, and Sarah Greenwood, resplendent in the pink crinoline of a bridesmaid under her short winter coat, thought we ought to try, anyhow. Edith, outvoted, gloomily acquiesced.

We walked up the vicarage drive, between two rows of laurel and rhododendron bushes. A dim lamp hung over the entrance, but it was bright enough to show the cracking and blistered white paint of the fine old front door. In answer to our loud knock, a chain rattled, a key turned, and the door opened a couple of inches to show us the wintry face of the maid.

"We want no mummers," she said.

"Will you please ask?" I demanded. "And tell the vicar my name."

She left the door ajar and shuffled away, muttering her contempt for mummers. Presently, the vicar's wife came down the hall. She was almost as tall as the door, and wore her hair in a giant plait around her head, which made her look like a timid goddess.

"What, exactly, are you doing, children?" she asked nervously.

I decided she must have been raised in a part of England where mummers were unknown, so I explained that we were sweeping the Old Year out and singing. Edith Edwards boldly held up her handbrush to show that we were properly equipped for the ceremony.

"Come this way, then," the vicar's wife said with a sigh.

We were led along a gaslit hall. A smell of mildew hung in the air. An old oak table and a black carved chair stood, defiantly handsome, on a threadbare carpet.

"Come into the library, children," the vicar's wife said gently. The servant, with the air of an infuriated hen, vanished into the kitchen, slamming the door.

Though the library needed fresh curtains and a new carpet as much as any millworker's cottage, two of its walls were covered with books. I had not come to see books, and my eyes raked

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the room looking for silver-decorated saddles, hand-woven rugs, and other rarities of Argentine origin. I looked in vain. There wasn't even a parrot. This was not the South American splendor I had expected. Even if one accepted the Englishness, it was a shabby display compared with the millowner's Victorian mansion, which was open to the public every Whitmonday.

The vicar jumped up from the depths of a worn leather armchair and made us welcome. He stood with his back to the feeble fire, benevolently smiling. His long arms swung loosely from his slightly bent shoulders, like an ape's, and his white teeth gleamed in his yellow face.

"A happy New Year," he said. He studied our diverse costumes. "You aren't doing the Saint George play, are you?" he asked in a voice that said he hoped we were.

"No. We're just singing," Edith said. "But we'll sweep the New Year in for you," she added, as cajoling and impudent as a gypsy. She knelt by the wan fire and swept a few stray ashes into the grate. "There's your luck for the year," she said.

"Splendid!" cried the vicar, and returned to his armchair. His wife had gone to the window seat, which was as far from the fire and us as it was possible to get. The vicar gave her a brilliant smile. "This is older than Christianity, my dear," he said, and got a ghostly smile in return. Edith's makeup particularly delighted him. "This black face comes down from the firesides of the German forests," he said.

"Yes, dear," said his wife. "Now let the children sing."

Edith pitched the key for us, as was proper for a girl whose father sang in the chapel choir, and we burst into song. We had carefully chosen our songs to match Edith's black face. We sang about pickaninnies and coal-black mammies and Old Black Joe, and ended with a harmonized version of "Way Down Upon the Swanee River."

It was clear from the vicar's face that he had expected something quite different. As soon as we had finished, he asked us if we never sang any folk songs, such as "The Raggle Taggle Gypsies."

"We sing those at school," I said, surprised that he should expect us to sing them anywhere else.

"The same fate as Shakespeare's," the vicar said bitterly. "I might have guessed it."

"We must give the children something to eat, dear," his wife said gently. She pressed a bell beside the fireplace, and a minute later the maid flounced in with a loaded tray. There were glasses of lemonade, some cookies, and slices of Christmas cake.

The vicar himself did not eat. Instead, he told us excitedly that the wonderful English folk songs and dances were our cultural heritage, which we should treasure. The songs were not meant to be sung in schools, he said, but in the home and in the street. It would be a tragedy if they should die out. His favorite, he told us, was "Lord Randal." Did we know it? None of us did

"Then I'll sing it for you," he said.

We listened while the vicar, in song, unfolded the tragic story of a young lord who had been to visit his sweetheart, a hussy who had given him a dish of poisoned eels. It was in the form of a dialogue between a mother and her stricken son, and unfortunately, in his zeal for realism, the vicar sang the mother's questions in a mock soprano, and rendered the boy's dreadful answers in his own deep bass. During the third verse, when the vicar described the eels as speckled and blotched, Edith began to giggle, and her hysteria spread to the rest of us. By the time the vicar had finished the sixth, and final, verse about the doomed young man and his mother, we were all gulping and choking.

"It's the lemonade," I said, feeling responsible for the bad manners of all four of us.

The joyful light had gone from the vicar's eyes. "Here's sixpence for your collection," he said gravely, and dropped the coin into the slit of our little cardboard box. We followed him to the front door.

"Good night, children," he said. "A happy New Year."

His face under the gas lamp was sad, as if he felt that we had not only rejected our native culture but turned our back on him, too.

—Winifred Williams

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A long study of the preferences of Air Force Officers convinces us that this splendidly tailored shirt will satisfy your most critical inspection down to the tiniest detail.

Throughout, it is made to exact specifications by one of the outstanding shirt manufacturers in the United States. In Air Force jargon, "it's built for comfort and neat appearance."—*Letter from a uniform company.*

Neat appearance in the tame blue yonder.

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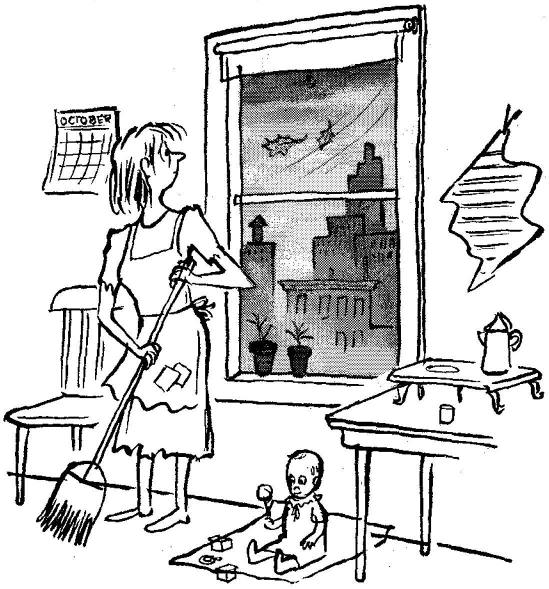

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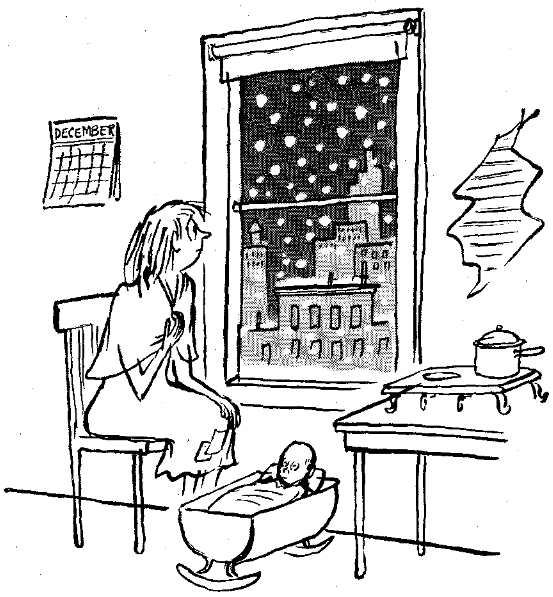

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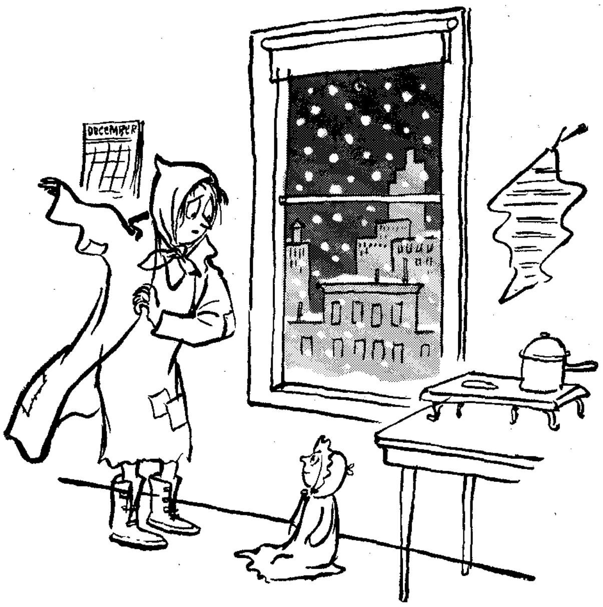

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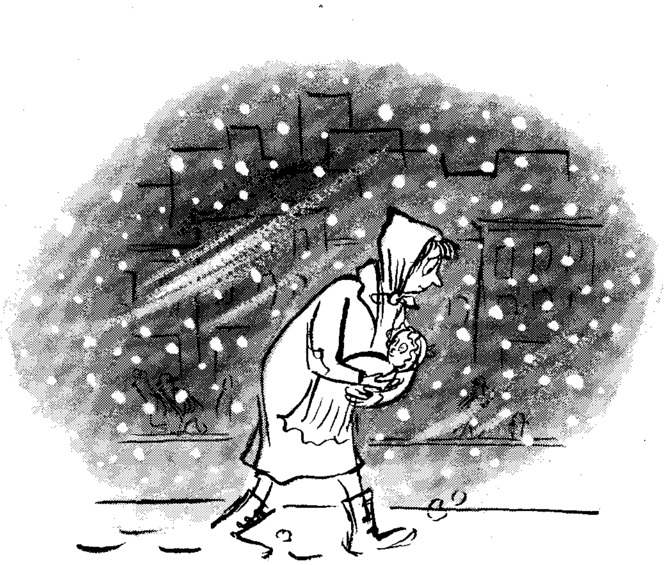

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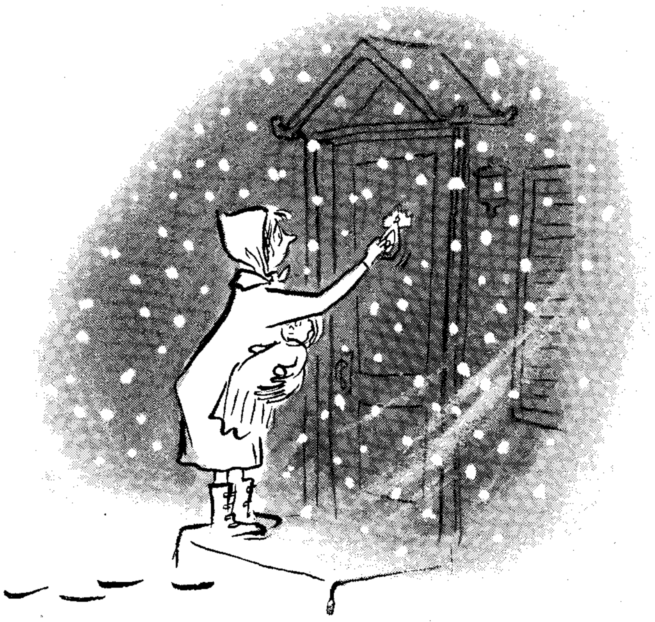

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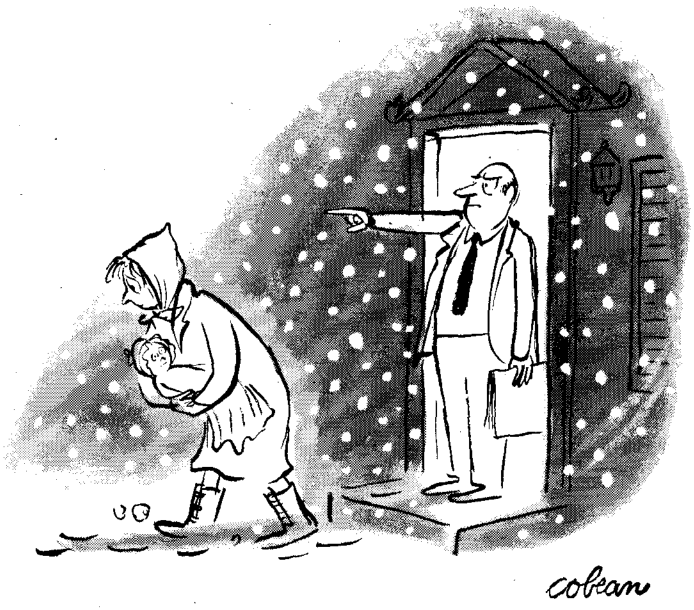
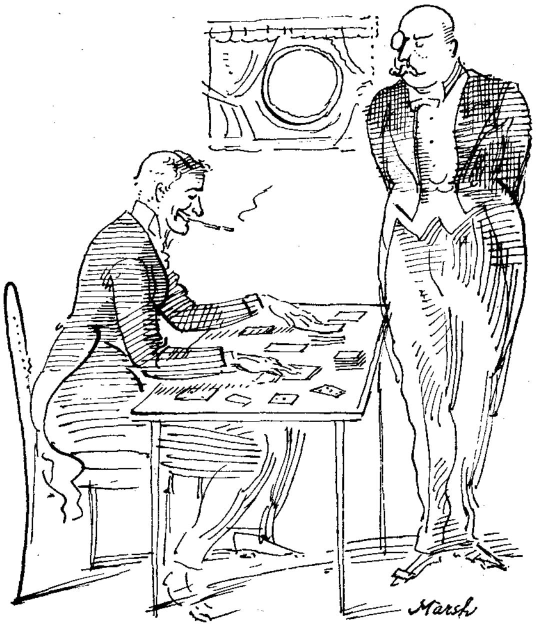


PROFILES

LEGEND OF A SPORT

POSTSCRIPT: THE PLAYWRITING PHASE—II



CONVERSATION was Wilson Mizner's hobby, profession, and neurosis. It was impossible for him to exist without a lot of ears around him, and he didn't particularly care whom they belonged to. He was usually able to provide himself with a small senate of eager listeners, and at Palm Beach, in the twenties, he invented a curious device to keep it from adjourning. He had a sprinkler placed on top of his favorite speakeasy. A secret signal to a waiter caused the sprinkler to be turned on when his audience showed signs of breaking up after lunch. As the speakeasy was windowless, Mizner was generally able to convince at least newer members of his little parliament that a heavy rain had started and that they might as well stay put until it was over. His invention sometimes enabled him to talk an extra two hours.

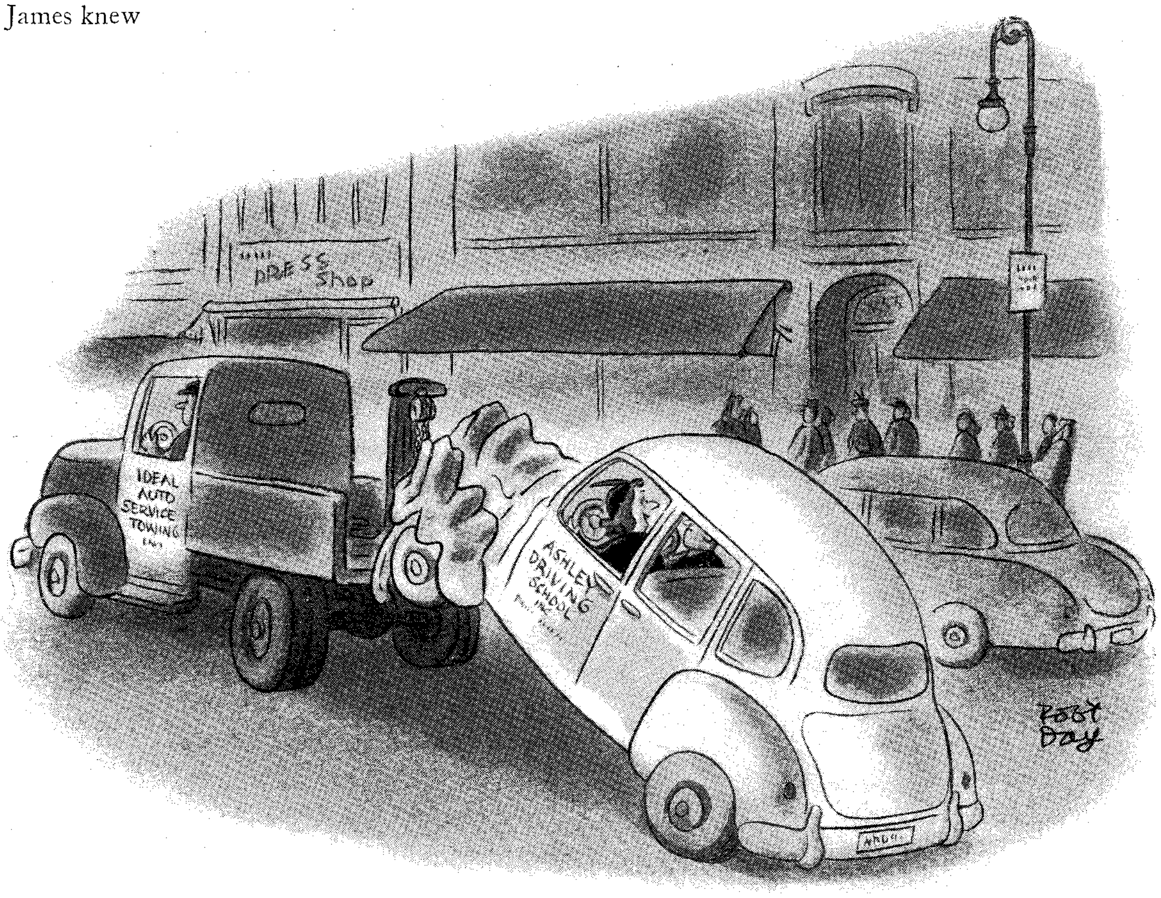
A Yorick born a few centuries too late, Mizner considered nothing important except getting a table into an uproar. He looked on the world as the human burlesque show and looked on all experience as raw material to be worked up into gags and anecdotes. He studied himself like an introspective novelist, alert for the conversational possibilities in his own reactions to any situation. Falstaff used the same technique when he paused in the midst of fleecing Justice Shallow to soliloquize on the fun he would have telling about it later. Mizner had rather austere standards. He hated drummers' jokes. He regarded anecdotes strictly as illustration and would as soon waste time shaving an egg as telling a story that threw no light on the subject of the conversation. A smutty yarn left him as unenthusiastic as it would have left Queen Victoria, although their responses were different. Mizner's enormous face would spring open like that of a hippo and he would let loose a terrifying false laugh when anybody told him the latest one about the farmer's daughter. Nearly all his comedy came from his own experience and imagination. He was an amateur at heart. He loved applause more than money, although he talked himself into a Fifth Avenue mansion, a Times Square hotel, and Florida millions. In his early cardsharping period, the chief part of his equipment was conversation. He had, as he explained in his comparatively respectable later days, an extremely difficult method of arranging a poker deck so that the suckers would receive very fine hands and he would receive a slightly better one. It required prolonged shuffling, and he had to talk in the most fascinating manner to prevent attention from wandering to the fact that he was taking a confoundedly long time. It was absolutely indispensable for him to laugh the boys out of their senses. He had to pour on the comedy until the chump at his left was in such a stupid state of suggestibility that he would automatically cut the cards as Mizner desired. Years of rigorous practical training were behind Mizner's mature conversational flights.

Mizner had millions of dollars' worth of comedy in his system, but it couldn't be marketed in the ordinary way. If an unlimited stock of similes and an instinct for the pulverizing, obliterating phrase were all that a writer needed, Mizner should have been the premier literary artist of his time, but his brain always seemed to go numb when he took pen in hand. He needed hysterical merriment, faces distorted with laughter, to warm up his inspiration. He felt like a professional mourner in the tomblike silence that surrounded him when he tried to write. He discovered, too, that there were some mean little stumbling blocks to putting words on paper. As a conversationalist, he could change the subject whenever a better one showed up. As a writer, he was supposed to stick to the subject or to struggle agonizingly over transitions in order to fool the reader when he changed it. As a raconteur, he could use a gesture in place of a sentence; he could, according to the old, old recipe, convey a libel in a frown and wink a reputation down, but he was unable to acquire the knack of translating conversational tricks into literary tricks. He occasionally wrote a good sentence, but he never learned enough about literary welding and steam-fitting to write a good paragraph. He was puzzled. He had a low opinion of writers as a class, and couldn't understand how they were able to outscribble a celebrated wit, raconteur, and epigrammatic philosopher like himself.

Mizner's troubles multiplied when he undertook a complex literary task like writing a play. He needed a collaborator, and a good one. His literary partner had to be a Lost and Found Department for Mizner's mislaid ideas, a Missing Persons Bureau for Mizner's wandering characters. Mizner had the good luck to be chosen as a collaborator by Paul Armstrong, the ablest dramatic technician of his time. H. L. Mencken, in his "Newspaper Days," calls Armstrong the King of Broadway and estimates that his royalties were greater than those reaped by any of his contemporaries or predecessors. Mizner's only contribution to the Mizner-Armstrong merger was conversation, and that was not too easy to get out of him, because he began to regard conversation with Armstrong as work. In newspaper interviews, Armstrong explained their method of collaboration. He said that the first step was to find Mizner. That might take weeks. Then came a period devoted to "argument, supplication, threat, and entreaty" to induce him to get down to business. Armstrong was more conceited about his coffee-making than about his playwriting. He didn't claim to be the greatest American playwright; he said that William Gillette, author of "Secret Service," "Held by the Enemy," and "Sherlock Holmes," was entitled to that designation. "But," he continued, "Paul Armstrong is our greatest coffee-maker." Nothing in the world, he asserted, except Paul Armstrong coffee could get Mizner up in the morning. Mizner's nocturnal ways were indicated by contemporary newspapers, which quoted him as saying, "I always get up at night, when everything is twice as high" and "Be sure it's light, then go to bed." Armstrong would break into his collaborator's apartment at an early hour, make a pot of coffee, and put some life into him. Mizner would then, according to Armstrong, buckle down to a strenuous morning's conversation on any subject that would take their minds off the play they were working on. Progress on their first joint enterprise, "The Deep Purple," written in 1910, was slow until Armstrong got Mizner away from the temptations of Broadway and held him a prisoner in a hotel in Baltimore. There, Mizner, rolling his own cigarettes, conversed at a rate of one act for every three sacks of Bull Durham.

In preparation for their second play, "The Greyhound," written in 1911, Armstrong took Mizner on a transatlantic voyage. "The Greyhound" was a melodrama about ocean-going crooks—"sea serpents," "deep-sea fishermen," or "pearl divers," as they used to be called. Mizner had a scholarly grasp of this subject. He knew international low life as Henry James knew international high life. For years, he had been practically a commuter from New York to London and Paris, and had made a total of thirty transatlantic round trips. He had dabbled in the theatre in London, and he called himself "the father of free lunch in Paris," because, with the help of some international characters, including the Broadway Polonius Swiftie Morgan and the colored heavyweight Sam McVey, he induced the proprietor of Ciro's to give away lobster, goose liver, caviar, ham, and anchovies in order to lure an American clientele to his place. Mizner was also something of a sea serpent or deep-sea fisherman himself. He said he was always able to win the confidence of strangers by warning them against strangers. He knew every twist of fraud and larceny on the high seas, but Armstrong didn't, and Armstrong insisted on the trip so that Mizner could brief him on background and atmosphere for their drama of deviltry on the steamship lanes.

Mizner usually won when he played games of chance, by land or by sea, but he never claimed to be a really great cardsharp. He was, however, a supreme artist at taking a lot of people thrown together by chance and quickly converting them into one big, happy family. His power to produce mirth in a small or moderate-sized group of people is said to have been unequalled. On the first night out, he would have the whole ship's population of prospective suckers bellowing. His function was to deprive them of their reason with Mizner gags; once the brain was completely abstracted, it was time for the cardsharps, dice wizards, and con men to go to work. Mizner, his mission accomplished, might then disport himself as he pleased for the rest of the trip. If his crooked friends prospered, they would make a suitable recognition of his contribution to the success of the voyage. One of the few survivors of the happy days on the high seas is Swiftie Morgan, who had a special talent for breaking down the reserve of upper-class Englishmen. Being small and wiry, Swiftie was introduced as the coming wonder of the American turf. Great jockeys were irresistible to British swells. According to Swiftie, Mizner seldom joined the big card games, but he would sometimes amuse himself by playing Bankers and Brokers. He would start it as a sort of solitaire, dividing a pack of cards into several small stacks. He would scratch his head, mutter to himself, and then finally pick up the cards and examine them with little exclamations of joy or chagrin. If anybody asked questions, he would explain that he was trying to guess the number of high cards in each pile. He would never invite another man to join in a game, but he would never churlishly reject the suggestion if it came from a likely-looking prospect. Swiftie says that Mizner relieved the Pittsburgh steel baron William E. Corey of fifteen thousand dollars at this pastime. Corey didn't know that Mizner always took the precaution of bending the high cards lengthwise and the low cards crosswise before he started to amuse himself. The curvature was microscopic and would never catch the eye of an unsuspecting opponent, but Mizner could tell by a glance at the side of a pile how many high cards it contained. He also earned considerable sums by winning ship's pools with enlightened guesses as to the

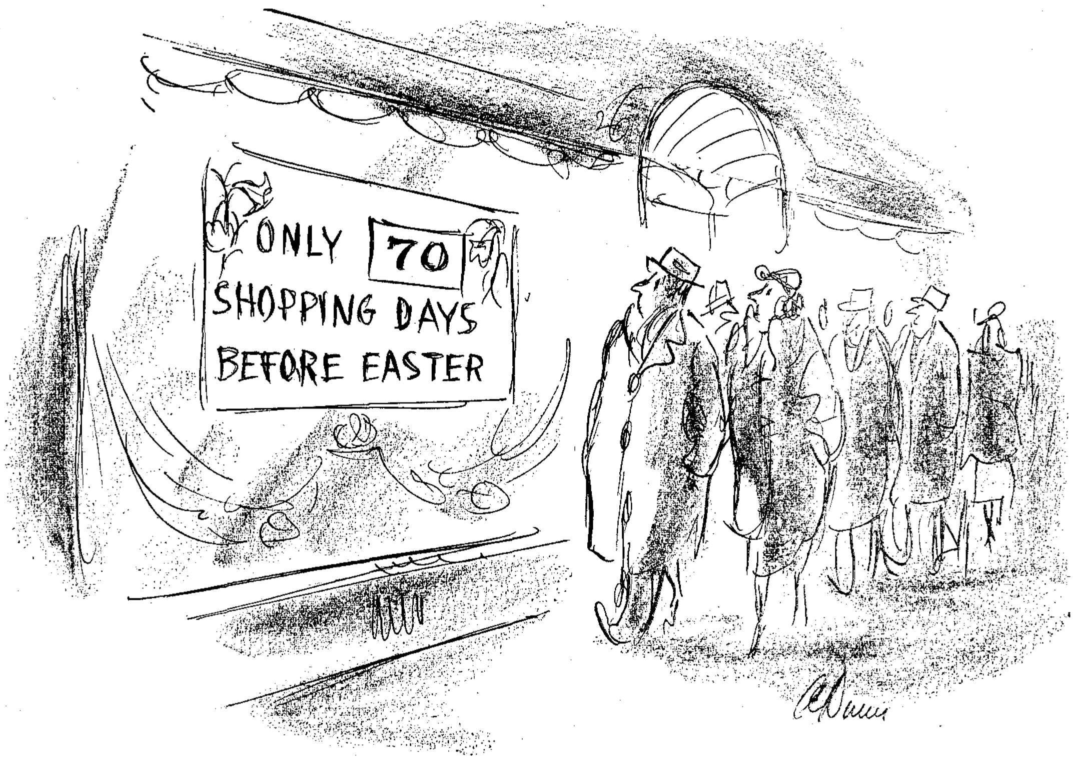


"It's like everything else, I guess—you only learn by doing."

distance that would be covered by the ship in each twenty-four-hour period. Because of the generally high calibre of ships' officers, the steamship pool is usually regarded as an unfixable form of gambling, but, so Swiftie says, one transatlantic steward with a private pipeline to the bridge of his ship retired a millionaire merely by selling inside tips on whether an even or odd number of miles would be covered in a given day, much of the betting being on "odd or even." The gifted steward never purported to foresee the total mileage on a given day, but Mizner and two confederates drew the lucky number three times in succession. It all started with a ship's officer who was practically a clotheshorse for medals. His chest, as Mizner described it, was ablaze with chafing dishes. Mizner couldn't believe that an honest heart beat beneath a whole showcaseful of jewelry. Standing outside the cabin of the glittering officer, Mizner mentioned to a confederate the number he had drawn in the pool for the next twenty-four hours, and added in a loud voice, "You know what I would do to show my gratitude if I won? I'd stick a thousand dollars under the right officer's pillow." Somehow or other, the day's run came out exactly right for Mizner, and a thousand dollars of his winnings turned up under the medal collector's pillow. There were two more conversations outside the cabin and two more miraculous strokes of luck for Mizner and his confederate. The fourth time they approached the cabin, however, a hoarse voice growled through the door, "Get out of here, you bastards. I'm four hundred miles off my course now."

WHEN Mizner started to work on "The Greyhound," he patterned his hero after Frankie Dwyer, an ace of salt-water crooks. Although not given to hero worship, Mizner had an unbounded admiration for Frankie, who was almost perfect in the major branches of crime—raking in ill-gotten gains over a long period and baffling attempts to prosecute. Although arrested on innumerable occasions, under many names, he died in 1929 without a single conviction against him. Fair-haired, blue-eyed, and handsome, he had an irresistible smile. The New York police had him dead to rights on one occasion, but they were forced to release him because the victim's indignation melted away at one beautiful smile from Dwyer. Mizner imitated Dwyer in some respects. It was against the ethics of high-class oceanographers like Dwyer to speak to strangers, but they were free to respond when a stranger started the conversation. Dwyer was always studying ways to make it easy for strangers to break the ice. He had one invaluable method of cuing in a stranger—rattling dice in his hand in an absent-minded way, dropping one near the stranger, walking away rapidly, then coming back a few minutes later and peering anxiously at the carpet. Venerable authorities say that Charles M. Schwab once returned the missing dice with a hearty laugh and wound up losing seventy thousand dollars to Frankie in a crap game. Mizner was infatuated with the "lost dice" gambit, and used it extensively. In his almost blameless later years, he practiced it for sport, hooking strangers merely to convince himself that he hadn't lost his genius. In his predatory days on the ocean, he suffered one of his greatest defeats in an effort to imitate Dwyer. He lost a spotted cube three or four times within plain sight of an Englishman. There was no response. Mizner continued to dribble dice at the Englishman all day long, but without making a dent in the man's reserve. A friend of both men happened along and introduced them. The Britisher took a great liking to Mizner and was soon bleating wildly at his jokes. Mizner kept on losing dice at his new pal, but he always had to pick them up himself. Finally, in deep disgust, he dropped one into his companion's tea. Nothing happened for several minutes. Suddenly the Englishman screamed, "Steward, my sugar has specks in it!"

Looking around for a villain for "The Greyhound," Mizner selected William A. Pinkerton, who had been Frankie Dwyer's nemesis for years. He had finally queered many of Dwyer's best schemes and would have landed him in jail except for the traditional unwillingness of suckers to have their misfortunes aired in the newspapers. Frankie took a rather humorous revenge on his persecutor. In the files of the Pinkerton National Detective Agency in New York is a message from Scotland Yard informing the agency that Frankie was attempting to establish credit with suckers by representing himself as one of the oldest and closest friends of William A. Pinkerton. After holding an international fencing match with the famous detective for twenty years, Frankie was able to talk about Bill Pinkerton in a familiar and convincing way. In addition to Dwyer and Pinkerton, Mizner did a full-length portrait of Deep-Sea Kitty, an interesting seafaring lady. He also dragged in one of his old Yukon pals, the Scurvy Kid, but he changed the designation to the Pale-Faced Kid when the original Scurvy Kid showed up in New York and threatened to start shooting if his good name was dragged into a Broadway melodrama. Paul Armstrong was delighted with the gallery of international felons that Mizner painted for him, but he double-crossed his collaborator by turning the moral values inside out. To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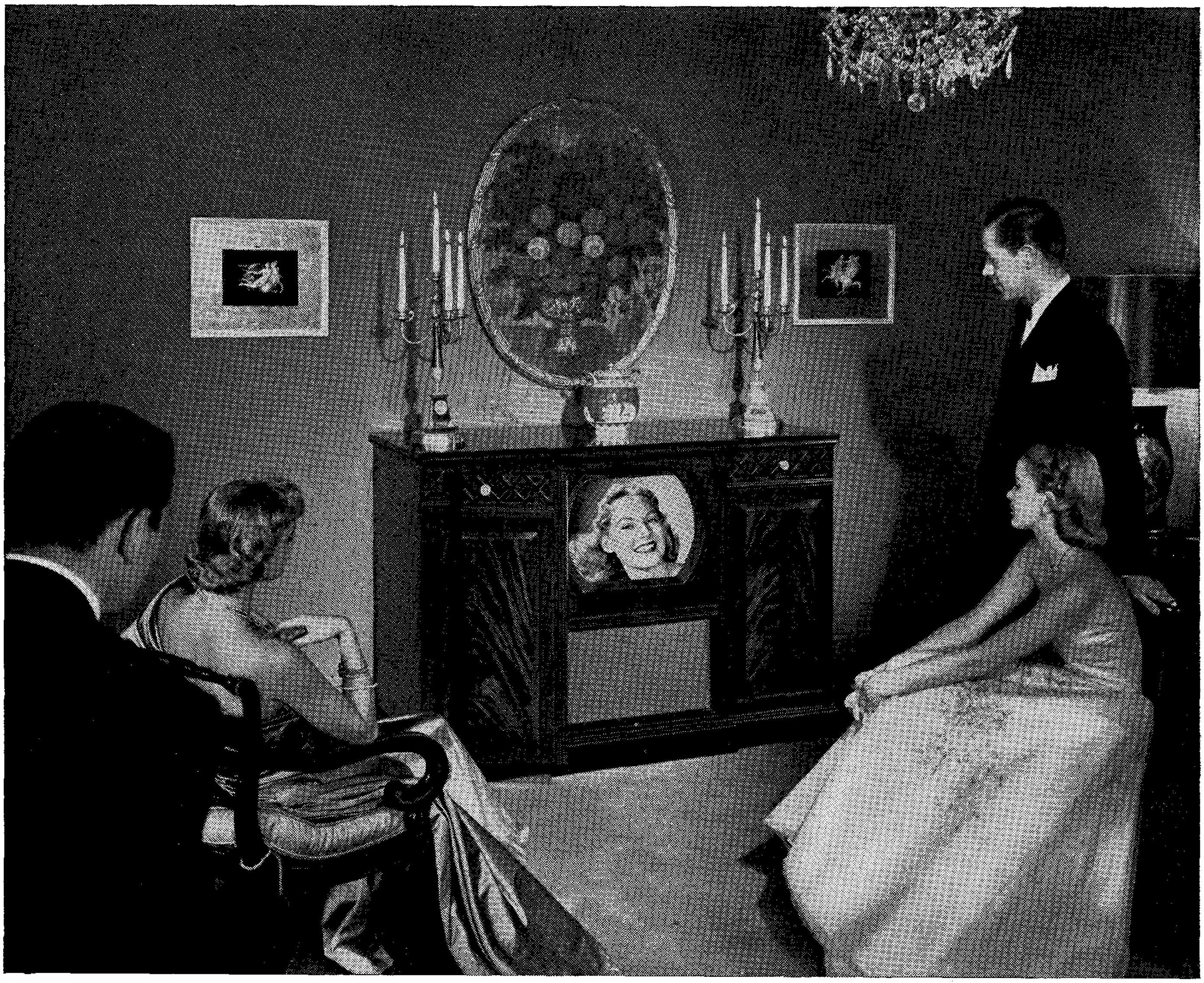

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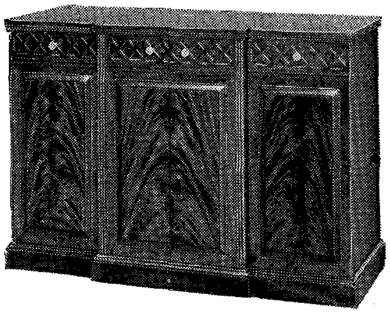

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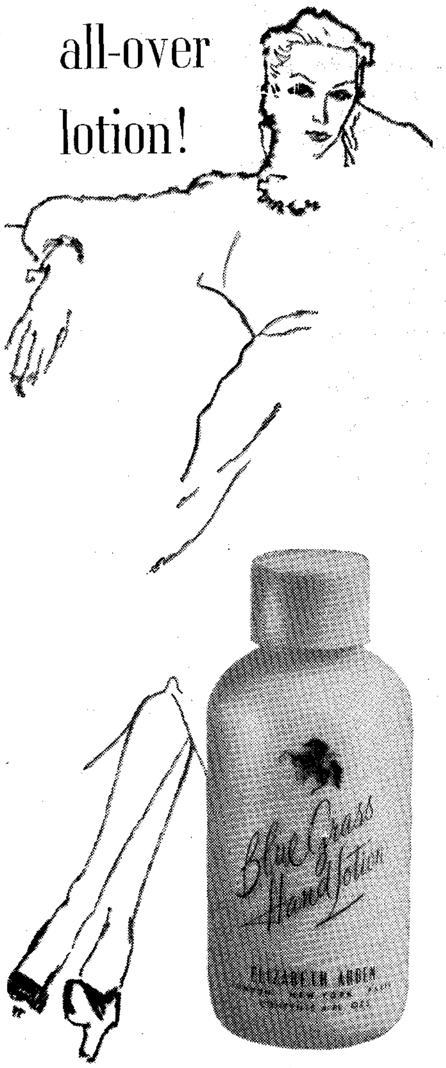

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Elizabeth Arden

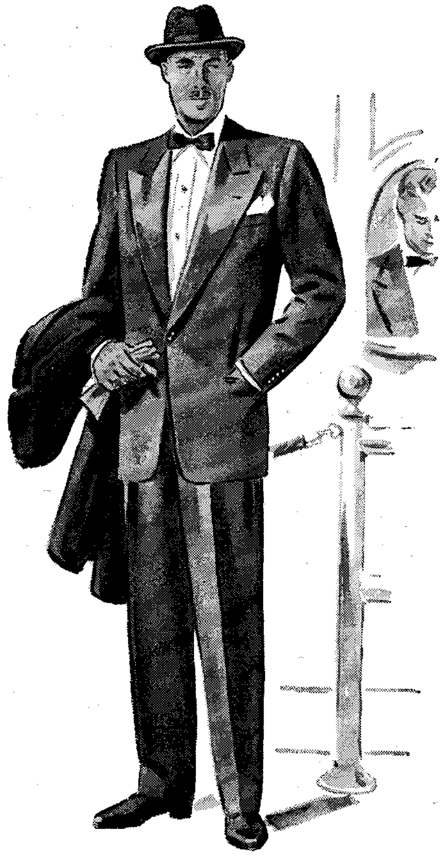
his partner's great disgust, Armstrong made Pinkerton the hero and Dwyer the villain. One of Mizner's boasts was "I can't write with a police whistle," but "The Greyhound" was practically a manual for teaching suckers how to take care of themselves. The play didn't hurt Dwyer, however, as he had already given up his marine career, following some deplorable scenes on the Mauretania in June of 1908. Dwyer was playing bridge with three suckers named Eric Thornton, F. C. Pirkis, and R. L. McLeay when Thornton got suspicious and threw a brandy-and-water in Dwyer's face. Dwyer and a couple of confederates pounced on the three men and there was a free-for-all fight in the smoking room. Later, the fight was finished outside, where Dwyer, showing a remarkable mastery of *savate*, kicked his three opponents in the scuppers. Twenty passengers signed a petition to the captain of the Mauretania, asking him to provide them with a little peace. Sensational accounts of the affair were carried in all the New York papers, most of them quoting the words of Vernon H. Brown, the New York agent of the Cunard Line: "Any passenger that plays cards with a stranger ought to have a nurse." Dwyer was held in jail in New York for a few days. Nobody made a charge against him, but the incident destroyed the usefulness of the ocean, and Frankie operated on dry land thereafter. For a while, he was an English nobleman with a monocle. One Pinkerton report tells how Frankie was ejected from a New York race track for passing bogus ten-pound bank notes on the bookmakers. It was one of Frankie's famous "safety first" rackets; the bookies couldn't prosecute without confessing their own illegal operations. Frankie wound up selling phony oil stock and running a fake medical institute.

MIZNER had to accept the change in program when Armstrong decided to make a hero out of the honest man and a villain out of the charming rascal. Mizner had no voice in the matter. Armstrong was the senior partner in the writing team, and it was understood that he could construct the play as he thought best. He and Mizner got along pretty well for a couple of temperamental and fantastic characters. There was no jealousy or rivalry between them. Armstrong was a distinguished playboy himself, but he was realistic enough to know that he couldn't play in the same league with Mizner. Nobody else approached Mizner's standing as the town wit and cutup. Damon Runyon called him "the Alcalde of the Roaring Forties" and "the wisest guy between the Battery and Spuyten Duyvil;" Irvin S. Cobb classed him as a wit with Mr. Dooley and the attorney Joseph H. Choate; the columnist Karl K. Kitchen called him the greatest wit on this side of the Atlantic; the *Morning Telegraph* dubbed him the Rapier of Broadway; the New York *Review* rarely referred to him as anything but "the peerless boulevardier;" Mizner's hostile friend and collaborator George Bronson-Howard described him as "the night key of Broadway" and "the man who owned Broadway." Armstrong was a celebrity of a different type. He was contentious, litigious, and pugilistic. He denounced producers, actors, critics, newspapers, and the public in curtain speeches, interviews, stage dialogue, and magazine articles. A columnist on the *Morning Telegraph* said that Armstrong had boasted that by simply doubling up his fist he had converted a critic from an unfavorable to a favorable opinion of one of his plays. Percy Hammond wrote that Armstrong "merely looked upon a 'juvenile' in 'The Greyhound' and the young man straightway went from the theatre back to the ribbon counter in Alpena, Mich." James Young, a star in Shakespearean tragedies and college-boy comedies, recovered damages of three thousand dollars from Armstrong, the testimony showing that, besides punching Young, Armstrong had called him Corse Payton, who was universally known as the world's best bad actor, and had then apologized to Payton. A Mirror candy-store clerk sued Armstrong for applying five thousand dollars' worth of language to him, and a Chicago *Tribune* reporter sued him for ten thousand dollars' worth.

For every man he punched or cursed, however, Armstrong cut ten people dead. During much of the time when George Tyler was producing Armstrong hits, Armstrong wasn't talking to him. In Tyler's life story, written in collaboration with J. C. Furnas, Tyler said that his feelings weren't hurt by the Armstrong silent treatment because it happened to everybody, but it made producing quite a chore, especially in the case of "Going Some." Armstrong and Rex Beach wrote this play in a room at the New York Athletic Club, where they took their lunch in tin boxes and put in a regular ten-hour day, but at the end of the collaboration Armstrong wasn't talking to Rex Beach, either. When the first Armstrong-Mizner play, "The

Deep Purple," opened in New York, Armstrong wasn't talking to Tyler; Hugh Ford, who was the director; or a dozen others connected with the show. Somebody asked George M. Cohan why Armstrong hadn't made his usual curtain speech opening night. "Paul wasn't talking to the audience," said Cohan. When "The Deep Purple" was produced in Chicago, Tyler hired private policemen to keep Armstrong away from the theatre and got out an injunction against him. Armstrong planned a violent countersuit, which he described in a wire to Mizner, who was in New York. "Are you with me?" asked Armstrong. "I am with you if you win," wired back Mizner. Armstrong once sued Tyler for twenty-three cents, claiming that a royalty check was short that amount. Armstrong carried the art of making enemies to the point of writing a letter demanding a retraction when the *Morning Telegraph* referred to him as a member of the Lambs Club. He may have taken the idea from Mizner, who, when he was blackballed by the Friars Club, distributed hundreds of engraved business cards with "Wilson Mizner" in the usual position and "Blackballed by the Friars Club" in the corner generally used for vaunting and self-advertisement.

Armstrong fought with everybody, from vaudeville-house managers to the greatest of the theatrical magnates. He had an epic struggle with the Keith-Albee company over a door that figured in one of his one-act plays. Armstrong wanted a solid wooden door that could be slammed resoundingly against a solid wooden frame, but the manager insisted that it wasn't possible to provide anything better than a lathe-and-paper portal. "I want a door that goes 'bang' and they give me one that goes 'phuuf,' " said Armstrong. The controversy was taken to J. J. Murdock, the Keith-Albee general manager, who said, "Give Paul what he wants," and ever since then stage doors have banged like cannons. Charles Frohman had the greatest reputation of all the producers of Armstrong's day, but Armstrong abused him savagely in newspaper interviews. The playwright claimed to have discovered that Frohman had been a butcher in early life, and he referred to him as The Butcher. Frohman directed the career of Maude Adams, the super-superlative star of the time. So awe-inspiring was she that a *Times* critic, on receiving a thank-you note from her, is said to have fainted. Frohman always wanted her to appear in boys' or men's attire, as in "Peter Pan" and "The Jesters," in order to underline the contrast between the elfin etherealness of Miss Adams and



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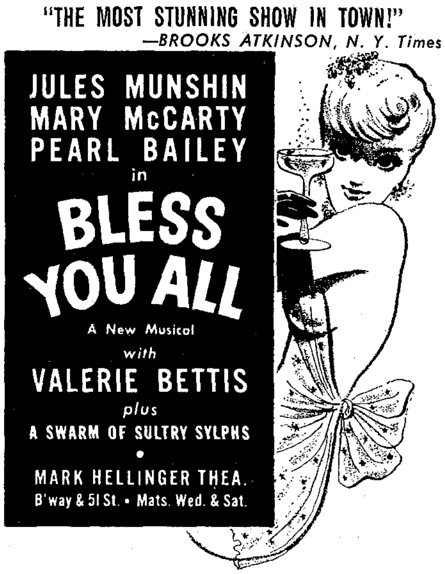
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in
"Hilda Crane"
An Exciting New Drama
by SAMSON RAPHAELSON
Directed by HUME CRONYN
with
BEULAH BONDI FRANK SUNDSTROM JOHN ALEXANDER
EVELYN VARDEN
"Great Theatre"
—Morehouse, W. Tele. Sun
CORONET, W. 49 St. Evs. 8:40. Mats. Wed. & Sat.

the obtrusive femininity of her rivals. In spite of his love of melodramatic obviousness and wallop, Armstrong was eager to turn out a play for the quaint and lovely Frohman star. "I'm just bughouse to write a play for Maude," he said, if the *Morning Telegraph* quoted him correctly. The *Morning Telegraph* added that Armstrong wanted to turn the enchanting little sprite into a sex-mad home-wrecker. Frohman had made the statement that Armstrong was the best writer of dialogue in America, and he agreed to hear an outline of the proposed play. Armstrong said that when he was halfway through, Frohman interrupted, exclaiming, "Oh, Paul, if you will only write a play where Maude can appear in men's evening clothes in the second act, I'll pay you any price for it."

ARMSTRONG was as theatrical as any of his characters. He had large, dark, dramatic eyes, thick, crescent-shaped black eyebrows, and a handsome, ruddy face, with mustache, whisker, and beard effects that varied according to the play he was writing. Working on a thriller about blooded horses and blooded families in the mint-julep belt, he wore the mustache and goatee of a fire-eating Confederate colonel; turning to a Western, he cultivated a set of black Buffalo Bill whiskers; turning to crime, he wore an up-to-date villain mustache and tiny con-man chin whiskers. Charles W. Collins, the Chicago columnist, writing of Armstrong in the *Green Book Magazine*, said that he "makes you think of gentleman-buccaneers, soldiers of fortune, duellists out of 'The Three Musketeers,' Cagliostro, and Baron Chevrial at forty." Ashton Stevens said that Armstrong appeared in real life made up as a "heavy" but that two or three strokes of a razor would turn him into a cherub. Armstrong affected a slightly ecclesiastical touch—an enormous amethyst ring of the type that is sometimes worn by bishops and monsignori. Even his drinks were melodramatic symbols of the knock-down-and-drag-out combat between good and evil. He usually consumed either an almost black potation or a snow-white one. The dark drink was Amer Picon sweetened with a little grenadine and mixed with soda. He called the white one the Milk of the Wild Cow—just gin and milk. He was not usually a heavy drinker, but he was a sensitive one and a small quantity of the Milk of the Wild Cow was sometimes enough to make him feel abused, aggrieved, wronged, and insulted. In his physical encounters, Armstrong always acted in the spirit of a Christian martyr socking the lions.

There was a good deal of kindness and good nature in Armstrong, and his truculence was probably the result of years of struggle and disappointment before he gained recognition. He never apologized for himself, but in newspaper interviews he placed some emphasis on the fact that he was born at Kidder, Missouri. In his boyhood, he and his parents moved to Saginaw, Michigan, where, after a sketchy education, he went to work on a steamboat. Armstrong claimed that the Saginaw River ran through the toughest region in the world and that he developed his philosophy of combat there. He became a competent street fighter, and even after he was famous he boxed regularly in gymnasiums, so that the big bullies would find him in the pink when they insulted him. He was purser on a steamboat running between Saginaw and Chicago during the World's Fair in 1893, and he later became a Great Lakes captain. This chapter in his biography was under suspicion at one time, according to H. L. Mencken, because Armstrong suffered almost continuously from seasickness when he made the trip to Europe with Mizner to get local color for "The Greyhound," but Armstrong had a Great Lakes master's license to corroborate his claim. The ambition to write took possession of him early in life, and he was scribbling short stories before he left Saginaw. Every one was rejected, so he decided to tackle literature from the journalistic angle. An episode in Armstrong's career as a reporter on the Buffalo *Express* became the plot of "The Cub Reporter," a short story by Rex Beach. A woman had been found dead under sensational circumstances, and her identity was a mystery. After the police and first-line reporters had failed to clear up the case, Armstrong was assigned to it. He had two clues—a key and a mitten. By methodically visiting baggage rooms, he found a trunk that opened with his key. In the trunk was the other mitten. Armstrong went back to the *Express* office with an enormous scoop. Shortly thereafter, he was fired for incompetence by his city editor, Samuel G. Blythe, eventually a star of the *Saturday Evening Post*. "Sam'll be remembered only as the man who fired Paul Armstrong," predicted Armstrong.

When, later, Armstrong was looking

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DWIGHT DEERE WIMAN presents
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PAUL KELLY in UTA HAGEN
"The Country Girl"
A New play by CLIFFORD ODETS
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Staged by Mr. Odets
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with JULIE HARRIS
Directed by HAROLD CLURMAN
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RICHARD WHORF · NANCY KELLY
in WOLCOTT GIBBS' New Comedy
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Directed by BURGESS MEREDITH
Anthony ROSS King CALDER Paula LAURENCE
CORT THEATRE
137 W. 48th St., Evgs. 8:40. Mats. Wed. & Sat.

for a job in Chicago, he happened to read some "goldbug" literature put out by Senator Mark Hanna's Sound Money League in the campaign against Bryan's free-silver heresy. The "goldbug" propaganda consisted of economics and statistics utterly unintelligible to the average reader. Armstrong, who was a great natural actor, put on a big scene in his effort to prove that the Republicans should use old-fashioned blood-and-thunder stuff to expose the silver horror. He was hired for fifty dollars a week, and Hanna was so pleased by his work that he kept the young man on the payroll a year after his job had been abolished. Armstrong used his salary to support himself while writing his first play, "Just a Day Dream," but although he received encouragement from Joseph Jefferson, he couldn't find a producer who would take a chance on it. Returning to newspaper work, he became Right Cross, prizefight chronicler on the New York *Journal.* He was soon famous. He knew his stuff well enough to make thirty-seven hundred dollars by betting on Jeffries, who was generally conceded very little chance to beat the great Bob Fitzsimmons when they met in 1899. One line written by Right Cross about the Jeffries-Sharkey fight at Coney Island in 1899 is sometimes quoted today: "Sharkey kept coming in like the surf."

Armstrong decided to put on "Just a Day Dream" himself. He used most of his savings and the money collected on bets to back it. The play opened in Boston and failed immediately. His other early efforts met similar fates. His mishaps in the theatre greatly entertained the *Journal* staff, and life in the office became rather painful to him. Even the office boys were in stitches at the thought of a prizefight reporter attempting to write a play. For years, Armstrong never walked past two people in conversation without believing that he could detect muffled laughter. The New York police were the first to recognize his talent. They gave tremendous applause to a sketch he wrote for a police benefit, and from then on Armstrong always treated his stage cops as sympathetically as his plots permitted. After saving up four thousand dollars, Armstrong got a leave of absence from the *Journal* in 1902 and opened his newest play, "St. Ann," in Baltimore, in the midst of strenuous backstage activity. He knocked out the leading man in a dispute over the leading lady. Armstrong's face and whiskers were covered with dirt, and he nearly suffered worse damage when a sandbag whizzed past him, after being launched at him from

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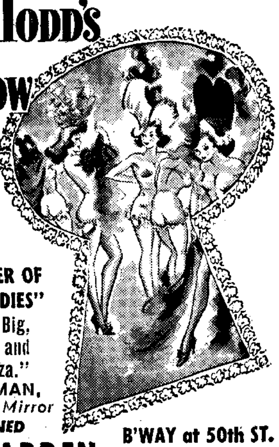

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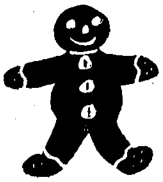
on high by a stagehand who had enlisted under the leading man's banner. Some members of the cast quit in terror because of the cursing and fighting, the ingénue ran off with the press agent, and quick substitutions had to be made at the last minute to enable "St. Ann" to open. In spite of being borrowed from Sardou, Pinero, Augustus Thomas, and other good sources, the play flopped badly. One of its by-products was a lifelong friendship between Armstrong and Mencken. Armstrong liked the lively way in which Mencken, then a young reporter on the Baltimore *Herald*, wrote up the turbulent offstage action.

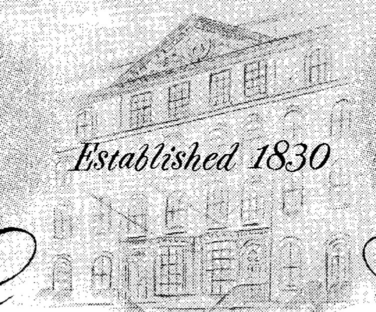


The reigning American playwright of that era was Clyde Fitch. His mincing personality outraged the grizzly-bear masculinity of Armstrong. Armstrong undertook to destroy Fitch by satirizing him in a play, "The Superstition of Sue." To make doubly sure of laughing Fitch out of the theatre, Armstrong modelled "The Superstition of Sue" after Charles Hale Hoyt's "A Texas Steer," which was then putting people into hospitals with internal injuries from wild hilarity. The humor of "The Superstition of Sue" arose from a long series of odd coincidences that frustrated the hero's attempts at suicide. Armstrong succeeded in interesting the producer Al Woods. Al and Mrs. Woods went to Armstrong's apartment to hear the play. Two friends happened to drop in to see Armstrong, and they consented to remain for the reading. Mr. and Mrs. Woods sat with frozen faces through the first act, but the two friends howled with glee. During the second act, Mrs. Woods joined the strangers in their ungovernable merriment, and she was weak from laughter at the end of the reading. Al never cracked a smile during the entire four acts, but he believed in democracy and the score was three to one against him, so he produced "Sue" on Broadway. The general opinion of it was summed up by the *Sun*, which called it "the drizzliest drivel." It closed in a week, in spite of vehement protests from the author, who pointed out that the nightly receipts had risen steadily from a low of twenty-three dollars to a high of forty-seven. Armstrong was now the author of a Broadway flop, and it was the turning point in his career. "Have a failure on Broadway," he advised young playwrights in later years, "and then all the producers will be interested in you." His first great hit was "The Heir to the Hoorah," in 1905, but that success, instead of soothing his uneven temperament, became the torment of his life. The play bore so much resemblance to "The Transmogrification of Dan," a short story sold for eighty-five dollars to *Smart Set* by H. J. W. Dam, that Armstrong was a target for plagiarism suits until the end of his life, and, in fact, for six years thereafter. He made a countercharge to the effect that the short story had been stolen from his play in a Baltimore restaurant where he had talked too freely about his idea for it. One jury held that twenty-three thousand dollars' worth of damages had been done to Dam's eighty-five-dollar tale. Sixteen years of litigation left the issue in doubt, Armstrong stealing the play from Dam in some courts and Dam stealing the short story from Armstrong in others.

Armstrong's next hit was "Salomy Jane," which was produced by George Tyler as a vehicle for Eleanor Robson. Armstrong wrote it in a week. He always did his best work, according to Tyler, at the highest possible speed. He became known as the Hair-Trigger Playwright, as well as Strongarm and the Apostle of the Punch. "Salomy Jane" nearly resulted in another plagiarism suit. It had been taken from the Bret Harte story of the same name. Armstrong thought that he was perfectly safe in helping himself to a classic, and he was astounded to learn not only that the story was copyrighted but that Bret Harte had heirs who were alive and animated. An out-of-court settlement was promptly negotiated.

ARMSTRONG was at the height of his career when he announced that he had formed a partnership with Mizner. The new playwriting firm was a mystery to some people. It seemed odd that the most successful American dramatist should team up with a man who had only a few vaudeville skits and one four-act failure to his credit. Armstrong's motives were mixed, but friendship was undoubtedly a factor. Fundamentally a big-hearted fellow, Armstrong was one of the many people who wanted to "make something of Wilson." Hundreds of people believed that Mizner had great talent, were concerned over the way he was wasting his life, and kept saying to him, "Oh, you must write." Armstrong was the only one with the ability and resolution to carry through the project of "making something of Wilson." He was ready to go to great lengths to help a friend. He had not become a successful writer of melodrama by accident. Nature had crammed him with the primary emotions. He was as quick with sobs and tears as with swings and hooks. Mencken, who heard him read scenes from his plays, has said that he never saw another actor of such emotional power and pathos. Among producers, Armstrong had the name of being "a dangerous play-reader." He could take the driest of scripts and turn it into such an emotional debauch that the tearful magnate would sign a contract on the spot, in the belief that he was about to produce the Niobe of the theatre. Rex Beach described, in a letter to Frank Case, of the Algonquin, an occasion on which Armstrong was nearly mobbed by wild Tammany women. The playwright had been asked to give a gold watch to the best-dressed lady at a Tammany district-club dance. For a while, he solemnly studied some very fancy creations. Suddenly he began to sniffle. A down-and-out-looking girl in a miracle of bad needlework and wrong color had entered his field of vision. The one spot of dowdiness in all that class went straight to Armstrong's great celluloid valentine of a heart. He handed the watch to the needy-looking girl and then made an exit before the general indignation could catch up with him. In spite of his occasional bursts of savagery, Armstrong inspired deep affection in many people. David Burton, a Broadway and Hollywood director, who played a small part in "The Greyhound," said that there was a theory among the young actors that Armstrong would do anything for you if you caught him in the right mood.

It was partly a sudden infatuation with crime that led Armstrong to adopt Mizner as a collaborator. Armstrong was a man of violent infatuations, and he usually contracted a major passion for any subject that he was writing about. It went beyond his changing the style of his whiskers to fit the play he was working on. When he was doing mint-julep drama, he fell in love with Southern belles, wore broad-brimmed Confederate-colonel hats, bought an old Southern manor named Acton, near Annapolis, and even mixed a little Dixie dialect in his conversation. Writing horse drama, he bought a stock farm at Holmdel, New Jersey, and was photographed with his arms around the necks of race horses he had purchased from Homer Davenport, the famous cartoonist. Writing Westerns, he turned his broad-brimmed hat up in front and down behind and worked the tall crown into a caved-in pyramid, in Deadwood-sheriff fashion. During a spell of illness, he happened to look into the Bible, and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he almost turned into an Old Testament character. "What a book, Henry!" he exclaimed to Mencken. "It's *full* of plots!" Dipping into American history, he planned a great motion-picture epic of Washington's march from Newburgh to Yorktown to bottle up Cornwallis. Had he lived, Armstrong would, in Mencken's opinion, have become the first writer of movie super-colossals. The infatuation with crime, which led to the Armstrong-Mizner collaboration, started when Armstrong wrote his safecracking masterpiece, "Alias Jimmy Valentine," in 1909. He got an unparalleled crush on the felonious life. He induced judges to parole old offenders in his custody, so that he could always have hardened criminals near him. One of them wormed his way into the box office of a theatre where an Armstrong play was on the boards and ran away with three thousand dollars of the receipts. Another, James Brown, alias Daniel Mason, had been convicted of throwing a brick through the plate-glass window of a store and looting it. Armstrong borrowed him from Judge Otto A. Rosalsky and gave him a small part in the Armstrong drama "A Romance of the Underworld." After some months of acting, James Brown, alias Daniel Mason, threw another brick through another plate-glass window, stole a ninety-eight-cent suitcase, and waited for the police to pick him up. "PREFERS PRISON TO APPEARING IN ARMSTRONG PLAY" said a headline in the *Morning Telegraph*, over a story that quoted Brown as saying that he felt free as a bird in his prison cell after his life in the theatre. Armstrong was so crime-smitten that he wrote "Alias Jimmy Valentine" in Warden John J. Fallon's office in the Tombs. He proudly unveiled his new crook vocabulary in a Sunday page interview in the *Times*, letting the world in on the fact that the "big house" meant Sing Sing, that "stir" was prison, that a "rattler" was a freight car, and that a "short rattler," or "short," was a streetcar. Columnists of the period said that Armstrong had obtained the authentic lingo in "Alias Jimmy Valentine" from Wilson Mizner and from Captain William J. Peabody and Lieutenant Val O'Farrell of the New York Police Department. The natural law of celebrities, which wrests honors from waning headliners and gives them to rising ones, has almost succeeded in stealing the authorship of "Alias Jimmy Valentine" from Armstrong. Edward Dean Sullivan, in "The Fabulous Wilson Mizner," makes Mizner the half author of "Alias Jimmy Valentine." Wilson's brother Addison, in "The Many Mizners," leaves Armstrong out completely and makes Wilson the sole author of the play. It is certain, however, that Mizner had nothing to do with the play beyond possibly acting as a consultant on underworld phraseology.

Another reason for the formation of the Armstrong-Mizner team was that Armstrong could not depend entirely on his own dramatic resources, and since he felt he needed a collaborator, he decided that he might as well have an entertaining companion like Mizner. Armstrong was a master mechanic in working with other men's brains. "Alias Jimmy Valentine" is an illustration of how various talents contributed to an Armstrong success. The Broadway star H. B. Warner happened to read O. Henry's "A Retrieved Reformation," the story of a reformed burglar who betrays himself by getting out his burglar's tools and opening a bank vault in which the little niece of his fiancée is accidentally locked and is in danger of smothering. The matinée idol could see himself starring in that scene, and he took the matter up with George Tyler. Tyler did his best to incite O. Henry to dramatize the story, and advanced him several hundred dollars. This investment bringing no results, Tyler offered him five hundred dollars for the dramatic rights. O. Henry leaped at this as a most generous proposal, and emphasized his gratitude by telling Tyler to help himself to any other O. Henry story, free of charge. When Armstrong was getting enormous royalties from several "Alias Jimmy Valentine" companies, O. Henry still insisted that the story wasn't worth a cent more than five hundred dollars and that it was a stage hit only because of the work of "a truly great dramatist." Armstrong had help on this play from others besides O. Henry. Percy Hammond said that the evidence was conclusive that "Alias Jimmy Valentine" was largely borrowed from "The Ticket-of-Leave Man," an English hit of the middle nineteenth century by Tom Taylor, editor of *Punch*. The literary heredity of the play was complicated by the further discovery that "The Ticket-of-Leave Man" had been adapted from "Le Retour de Melun," by Edouard Brisbarre and Eugène Nus. One of Armstrong's last plays, "The Escape," was based on a conversation with Mencken about sin. Mencken was not against it. With his customary refusal to accept the orthodox point of view, Mencken found certain cultural advantages in the life of shame. Starting with the novel idea that the underworld could be a sort of Sorbonne, Armstrong wrote his one elaborate excursion into sociology.

The first Mizner-Armstrong play, "The Deep Purple," was a great hit and a big money-maker. Mizner called his new occupation "telling lies at two dollars a head." Armstrong told Ashton Stevens that Mizner didn't believe that you could legally make so much money so easily and that he didn't cash his royalty checks for several weeks for fear of a trap. The second Mizner-Armstrong play, "The Greyhound," was strong in character, incident, and comedy but lacked the melodramatic wallop of its predecessor. The authors told too much in advance, so the climaxes were twice-told tales. The multi-scene technique was just becoming popular in the theatre. Armstrong, in spite of seasickness, had conceived one of his passionate enthusiasms for the ocean liner, and he chopped the dramatic action up into many scenes in order to show the audience all over the ship. The actors were continually confused. The curtain had to be rung down one evening because Dave Burton, the juvenile lead, miscounted the scenes, his mental processes being a little upset by the fact that he had a date after the show with a Winter Garden chorus girl. He was getting ready to leave the theatre when there was a pounding on his dressing-room door and loud cries for him to go on in the final scene. The stage manager made a curtain speech, saying that there would be a slight delay because Mr. Burton had met with an accident. After he had his stage clothes and makeup back on, he appeared, affecting a limp and an expression of agony. The audience, thinking that the old trouper spirit had triumphed over a broken leg, gave him the greatest ovation of his career.

Another trouble with "The Greyhound" was that it had been rashly cast. A young actress, charming and lovely in light scenes, failed in the big, emotional climaxes. One day, it was reported backstage that Mizner was pale, shaken, and unnerved. He was talking to himself and looked as if he had seen a ghost. He kept muttering "What next?" Later, it was explained that somebody had carried a tale to him to the effect that the disappointing emotional actress was a good girl in private life. Mizner had been sure that some untoward factor was preventing "The Greyhound" from being a sensational hit, and he believed that all was now revealed. He was very polite to the young actress and never let her know of the imputation against her. He blamed the leading man as an accessory, and was furious with

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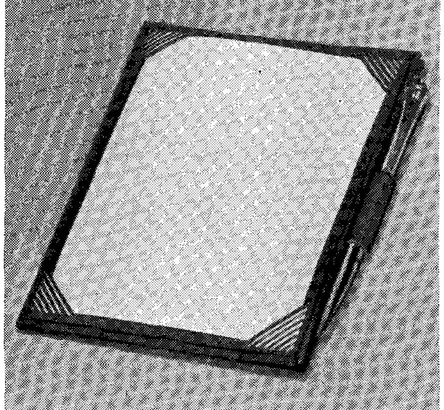

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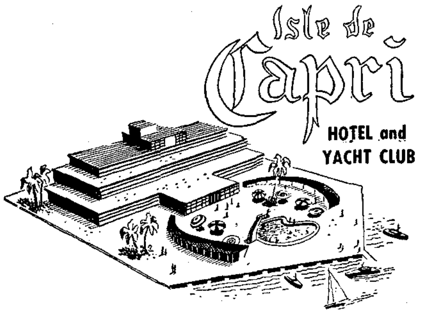

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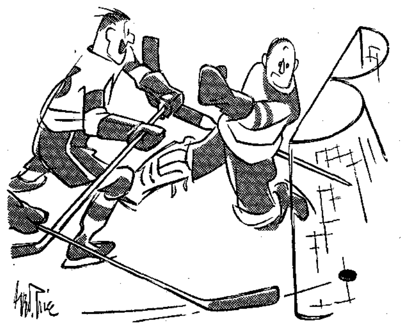

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Armstrong, who had cast the show. But the various misfortunes of "The Greyhound" were soon overshadowed by a real disaster. The play had been running in New York for several weeks when the Titanic hit an iceberg and sank, on April 15, 1912. People were too horror-stricken by that tragedy to endure a play about an ocean liner. Box-office receipts, which had been running upward of twelve thousand dollars a week, fell to five thousand, and the play soon folded.

AFTER "The Greyhound," Mizner and Armstrong broke up their writing partnership. They had had only minor feuds. Armstrong had given the silent treatment to his collaborator for a few weeks because Mizner complained that Armstrong used long words when he might as well have used short ones, and used pure English when vulgarity would have served. The splitup came partly because Armstrong was worn out by the task of finding Mizner and inducing him to talk, and partly because Mizner was dissatisfied with the division of the spoils. In view of his proved money-making talents, Armstrong received two-thirds of the royalties and Mizner one-third, and he wouldn't agree that his partner was entitled to a higher percentage.

Mizner and Armstrong were brought together again a few months later by their old friend A. Toxen Worm, the most brilliant theatrical press agent of the era. He was a Danish-American of immense girth; his full name was Conrad Henrik Aage Toxen Worm, and he was generally called Tox, the Great Dane, or Tanbark Worm. The *Morning Telegraph* said that he was known among his overshadowed rivals in the publicity field as Anti-Toxin Worms. He was a bon vivant of aristocratic manners, having had a touch of high life in his youth, when he played with the heirs apparent who later became Kaiser Wilhelm II, Czar Nicholas II, George V of England, Haakon VII of Norway, and Christian X of Denmark. Toxen was a village boy in Charlottenlund, where the five little princes spent their summers, and he was called in with other village boys to be chased and mauled by young potentates in the game of Soldiers-and-Robbers. After a boyhood with five future monarchs, Toxen was naturally a little majestic. The name A. Toxen Worm was inscribed in press-agent history forever on January 20, 1902, when he carpeted a section of Forty-second Street with tanbark because Mrs. Patrick Campbell was sensitive to sound. Horse-drawn trucks with

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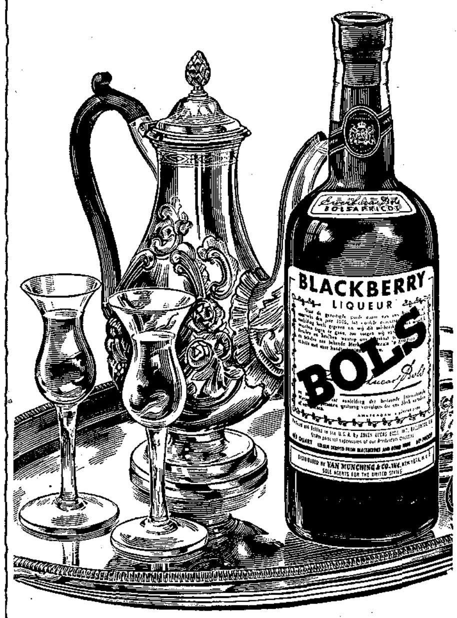

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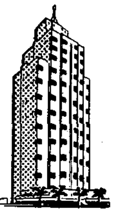

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iron tires rattled over the cobblestones of Times Square at that time, and Mrs. Pat asserted that the streetcars seemed to crash right into her dressing room in Hammerstein's Republic Theatre. The tempestuous star, who was appearing in repertory, endured the racket until she started to present "Beyond Human Power," a Björnson play that called for muttering, whispering, and long silences. Then she gave signs of losing her mind. In 1902, when national heroes were tossing on a bed of pain or great public funerals were being held, it was a routine thing to hush the street noises by laying tanbark on the cobblestones. Acting on that idea, Tox telephoned to a tannery supply house, in Newark, and ordered truckloads of tanbark to be laid outside the theatre. When the police, street cleaners, and reporters came, demanding an explanation, they were told, "Mrs. Pat Campbell has to have quiet." After several conferences, the police and Commissioner John M. Woodbury, of the Street Cleaning Department, agreed to let the tanbark stay. But three days later, Borough President Jacob A. Cantor of Manhattan ordered it removed. Newspapers that thoroughly hated press-agent stunts and free advertising had to print the story or cheat their readers of the talk of the town. The *Morning Telegraph* described the tanbark as "papyrus leaves" that would carry the name of A. Toxen Worm down the ages, and the tanbark incident is still considered the most inspired of all press-agent stunts except the milk baths Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr., provided for Anna Held.

Toxen became Mizner's closest friend and the leader of those who wanted to "make something of Wilson." He contended that a shorthand-writing Boswell ought to be kept at Mizner's elbow to record his talk for posterity. Toxen thought that the collaboration with Armstrong was the greatest thing that had ever happened to Mizner, and he had furthered it in every way he could. He had crossed the Atlantic with Mizner and Armstrong when they went in quest of atmosphere for "The Greyhound." On August 31, 1912, Toxen gave a dinner at Rector's to celebrate the reunion of the collaborators, and on the spot they laid plans to write "The Pirate," which was to be a vehicle for the idol Lou Tellegen, an import from Holland. Before work could be started on "The Pirate," however, Mizner had a severe attack of appendicitis. He had a wild terror of croakers and sawbones, and it was not until his life was in imminent danger that he would consent to an opera-

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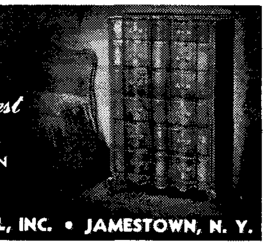

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tion. He drew up a will naming Toxen Worm as executor, and instructed him, "Have my coffin fit well around the shoulders." Mizner was such a Broadway institution that his operation, which took place on September 20th, made the front page of several New York newspapers. The *Press* quoted Addison Mizner to the effect that Wilson's first words on coming out of the anesthetic were "So this is America." In a letter to Frank Ward O'Malley, of the *Sun*, Mizner subsequently told of a painful preliminary dispute he had had with the hospital's "booking agent" over where the remains were to be sent. He said that, wheeled into the operating room, he still clung to the one last hope that the joint would be raided, and that he would have fought against the chloroform except that it was against his principles ever to interfere with the dealer. The *Morning Telegraph*, announcing that Mizner was out of danger, said, "He will never leave this world while there is anything left in it." Mizner made a quick recovery, but he used the operation as an excuse for avoiding conversational story conferences with Armstrong. Much as he loved conversation, he hated work more, and by now he definitely identified conversation with Armstrong as work. Winning an enormous pot at poker in December, Mizner used it to take his fellow-players on a junket through Europe, ostensibly to escape the boredom of Christmas in New York but probably to escape from Armstrong. At any rate, that was the last of the firm of Armstrong and Mizner.

—ALVA JOHNSTON

(*This concludes an addition to a series of articles published in this magazine some years ago.*)

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SILVER LINING DEPARTMENT

[*David Lawrence in the Herald Tribune*]

While the situation inside Korea goes on as before, there are certain advantages possible now which were not present a few weeks ago. For one thing, even if MacArthur had met no opposition as he sent his troops to the northern boundary of Korea, there would have been no assurance that the Chinese troops in Manchuria would not have descended upon the U. N. armies without warning at any time. A long period of nervous suspense has been averted.

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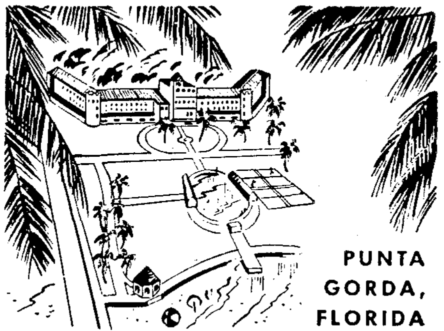

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THE THEATRE

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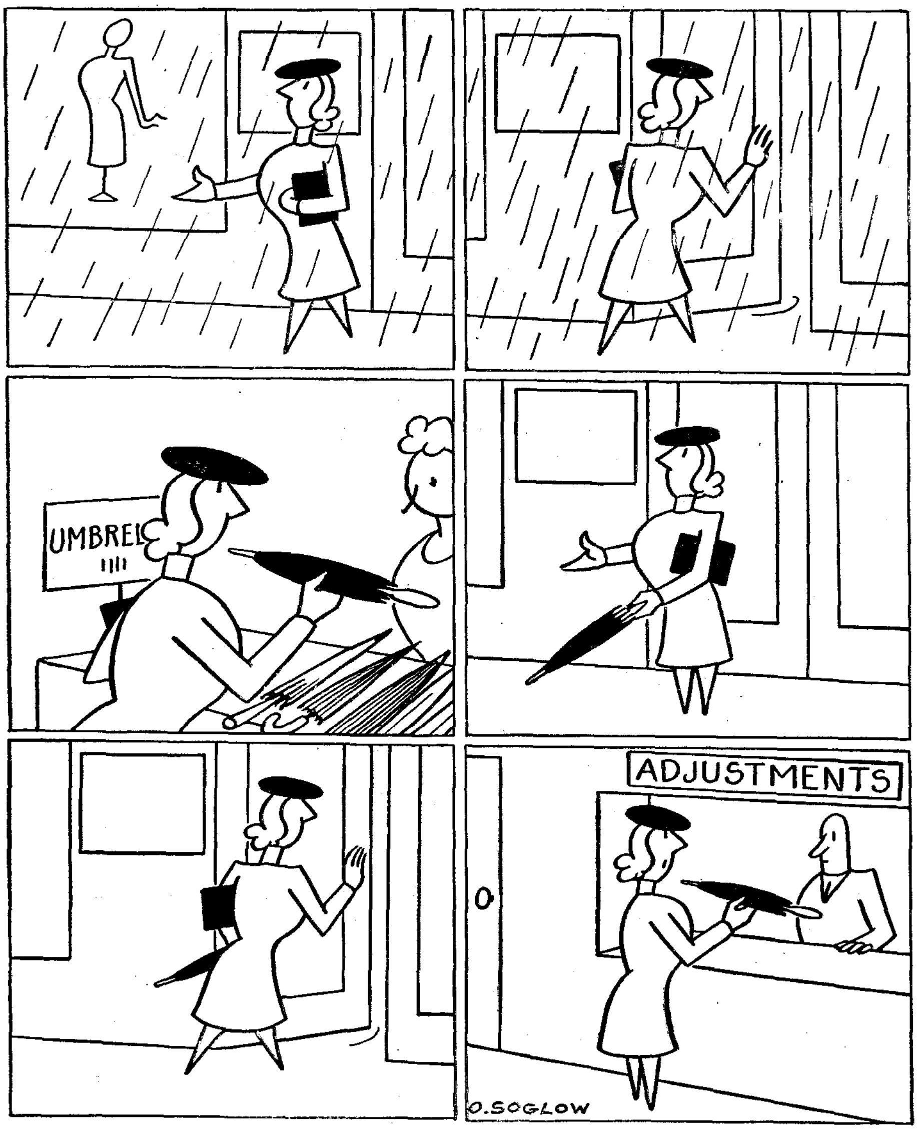
"Out of This World" is a remarkably handsome show that contains several of Cole Porter's most typical musical efforts; quite a few excellent performances, especially by Charlotte Greenwood and David Burns; and a great deal of the sort of humor that has been diverting Miss Elsa Maxwell for years and apparently still does. The book, attributed to Dwight Taylor and Reginald Lawrence, is based loosely on the Amphitryon legend, which, for the benefit of the unscholarly, has something to do with Jupiter's impersonation of a mortal man for purposes of seduction. It is complicated in this case by the introduction of a former Chicago gangster and other irrelevancies, but it remains essentially the same old story, and I suspect it of not being very funny, perhaps because I am a little older than I once was, or perhaps just because I have never been much of a man for sex in its archer aspects. However, as I have noted, it still seems to titillate the international set, and who am I to buck that kind of opinion?

Mr. Porter's music and lyrics, which are probably the real reason for doing the darn thing at all, are nice enough in spots but may bring back just a few too many echoes of the vivacious past. There is, for instance, a song called "Cherry Pies Ought to Be You" that might have been written twenty years ago and conceivably was, and another, known as "What Do You Think About Men?," that has something of the quaintly sardonic flavor of the old *Smart Set*, and still another, peculiarly listed as "I Jupiter, I Rex," that explores all the rhyming possibilities of the word "Rex," and then some. As a matter of fact, though I am sure no one would resent this statement more than Mr. Porter, the score of "Out of This World" strikes me as happiest when it is frankly sentimental, as it is in such numbers as "No Lover for Me," "Where, Oh, Where," and "I Am Loved," none of which, as far as I can remember, advances any notion that would have been repugnant to Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

The other good things about the new musical at the Century can hardly be praised too highly. Lemuel Ayers has done a series of sets and costumes that have all the style and charm that are so sadly lacking in the book; Hanya Holm has arranged some dances, principally for a young woman named Janet Collins, that are as striking as any I can recall; the cast, in addition to Miss Greenwood and Mr. Burns, includes Priscilla Gillette, William Eythe, George Jongeyans, William Redfield, Barbara Ashley, and Ray Harrison, and all these people are either gifted or ornamental, or both; and Agnes de Mille has staged the whole production with a good deal more distinction than I would have thought possible under the circumstances.

I'm sorry to say that no precise specimen of the wit in the libretto has stuck in my mind. I know that now and then Miss Greenwood, as Juno, expressed her displeasure with her husband's habits, giving it as her considered opinion that several centuries of adultery would be enough to get any girl down, and it seems to me that Mr. Burns, as the gangster, occasionally remarked on the comparative peace of Cicero in the old Capone days. There must have been more jokes than that, though. Or maybe there weren't.

—Wolcott Gibbs



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WORDS OF ONE SYLLABLE DEPT.

[*From Writer's Digest*]

Here are reports on some new magazines and on some which have undergone changes before or shortly after reaching the newsstands.

Most sophisticated is *Kirkeby Hotels Magazine*, which has been published for some time by Hotel Publications, Inc. Since it is distributed chiefly to the guests of eleven of America's smartest hotels, with some copies going out to a selected mailing list, it is not familiar to most writers.

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TABLES FOR TWO

Hard Workers

Henny Youngman, one of the two featured performers in the current show at the Copacabana, is a tall, gawky man with an immense amount of self-possession—call it gall, if you like—and an uncompromising attitude toward his trade. His chief charm lies, I think, in the simplicity of his method. He plants himself in front of the microphone, a foolish smile on his face and a long, unlighted cigar in one hand, and rattles off gags until his listeners show signs of softening up under the bombardment. Afterward, he proceeds to slightly more involved comedy routines. Unlike other comedians who employ this sort of grapeshot opening, Youngman appears to care little about the reception his jokes get. He shoots no coy glances around to point up a doubtful quip, nor does he chastise the audience for any slowness of response. He simply tosses the jokes out as rapidly as possible, pausing after each one only long enough to give his listeners time to absorb it. His sole bit of business during these pauses, aside from the silly grin, is to slowly scan the spectators, eying them calculatingly and depending on his sure sense of timing to dictate the start of the next gag. Another thing in his favor is his complete lack of sentimentality. He doesn't have a good word to say for anybody—not even the usual nauseating thanks to the management, the "boys in the band," or any of the other sources of security that are customarily patronized by entertainers. The night I saw him, he followed his opening patter with a parody of "Some Enchanted Evening," dismaying in prospect but fairly funny in execution. Next, he got a pair of violinists from the orchestra and, equipped with a violin himself, became a member of a trio, in which he was, of course, the least proficient performer. Here, again, his confidence in the whole rash enterprise made it all seem quite funny. Each of these three main sections of his act was built up to exactly the right proportions and stopped before it could grow tiresome.

A far more determined but infinitely less compelling entertainer, named Luba Malina, takes the floor before Youngman. A singing comedienne, Miss Malina drives a hard bargain. In order to succumb to her material, you must accept as the essence of charm and appeal her strong accent and her wide-eyed preoccupation with presenting herself as a high-voltage female. She does wear you down to some degree of acceptance after a while, and the night I studied her it was just at this point that she offered her most amusing piece, a song about the wife of a skywriter, which she did superbly and which hinted at her capabilities as an actress.

Speaking of singing comediennes, there is a young lady at the Blue Angel, named Connie Sawyer, who can hold her own with the best of them. She is versatile and persuasive, and in her routines darts back and forth between brashness and winsomeness with all the nimbleness of a good base-runner. Her repertoire is made up of song numbers interspersed with dialogue. A bright-looking blonde with a frank, attractive face, she tells outlandish stories of the West, of improbable liaisons between leading characters in national advertisements, of the hardships of being a wall, and other matters. Keen timing and a rich and varied comic spirit keep all these things in the air without slackening. I thought her performance was vastly enjoyable, broad and funny in a wholesome way. . . . Jane Morgan, the singer at the Maisonette, the cozy basement room in the St. Regis, is a handsome newcomer to local night life. Miss Morgan, it appears, has been singing in Paris for a few years, but not too many years, for she is a fresh-faced and exceedingly pretty young blonde; moreover, she is still a bit immature as a performer. I could look at her all night, but I'd prefer it if she didn't keep singing so industriously, because she sings everything in much the same bright, smiling way—nothing to make the old heart ache. Having been to Paris, Miss Morgan drops into French now and then. Some of her songs struck me as quite artful. Whatever her failings as a performer, she is one of the most beguiling young things trailing the hem of a costly gown around a night-club floor these evenings.

—D. W.

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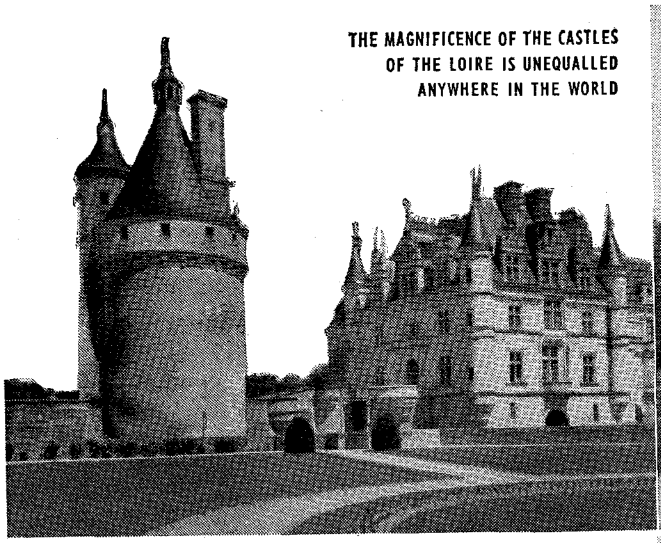
LOVE IS A WONDERFUL THING DEPARTMENT
(DIVISION OF IMPULSIVE PREPARATION)

[*From the News*]

Miss Hopkins' next big romance is due to arrive in 1951, an astrologer told her. "I was so excited to hear that that I rushed out and bought a new car," she said.



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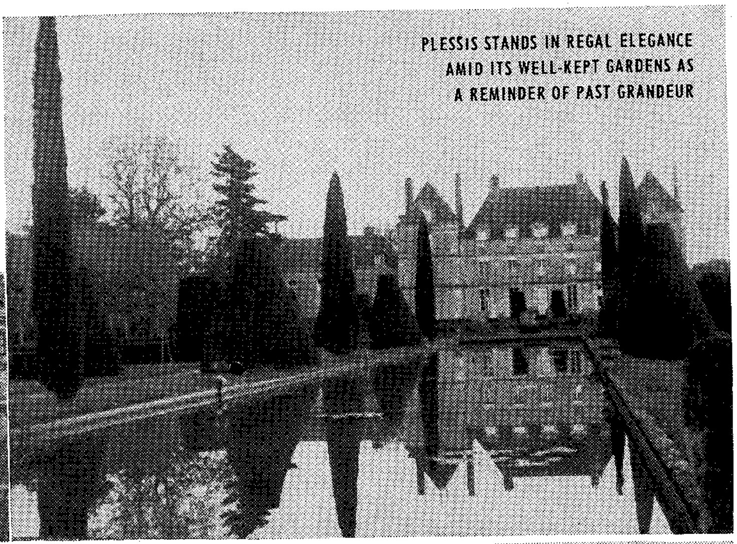

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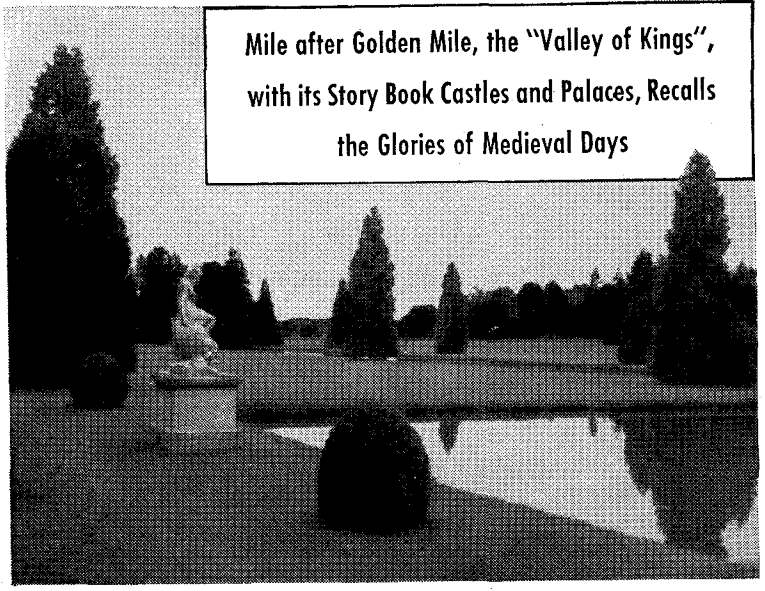
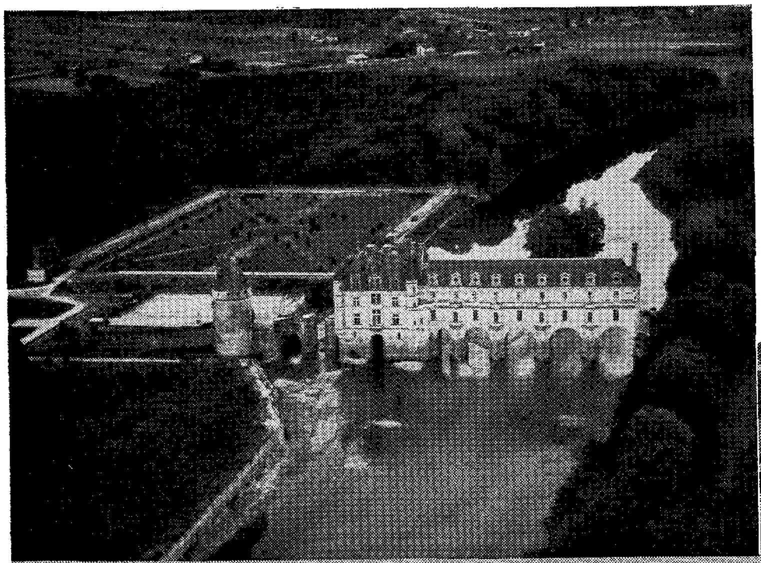
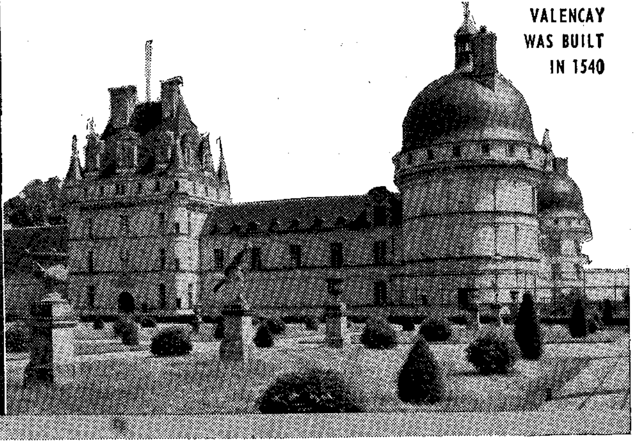


▲ GARDENS OF CHATEAU VOISINS

CHENONCEAUX FAMOUS FOR ITS ARCHES ▼





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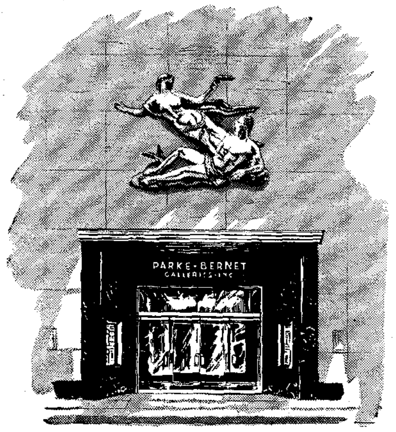

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THE ART GALLERIES

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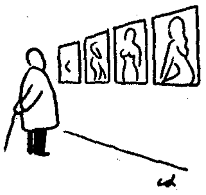

OUR range this week—physically, at least—is from a memorial exhibition of the work of that exponent of the buxomly Junoesque feminine ideal, the late Charles Dana Gibson, at the Museum of the City of New York, to a set of new sculptures and other works, at the Pierre Matisse, by the Italian modernist Alberto Giacometti, whose lean, lanky men and women are so tall and attenuated that they seem at times to approach the one-dimensional. Gibson, of course, impinges on the field of pure art only obliquely. He lived on until 1944, but his period of greatest fame and influence was the first decade of the century, when his Gibson Girl had a vogue of a sort that has probably never been equalled. Songs were written about her and a revue was named in her honor. Vases, ashtrays, and even whole sets of dinner plates were embellished with her portrait, and her high pompadour, demure shirtwaist, and queenly (if a bit sway-backed) carriage had a conspicuous effect on American fashion almost up to the First World War. When, in 1905, her creator went to Europe, *Life*, with what must have been an unprecedented gesture to an artist, devoted a double-page spread to a drawing called "Au Revoir, Gibson!," in which some dozens of her, cleverly counterfeited by a fellow-contributor named Victor Perard, lined the pier to wave him farewell.

Looked at now, the Gibson Girl, with her rather too perfect "Grecian" profile, seems a trifle austere to inspire such a furor. But the drawings still have their value, and I found a good deal of interest in the picture of the contemporary society they present. To be sure, Gibson's ideas were stereotyped (poor young men could not always have been so determinedly handsome, social climbers so desperately ugly and vulgar, and pretty daughters so often the victims of decrepit old earls), and his is, in large part, more a comedy of mannerisms than of manners. Yet he could draw when he wanted to, crisply, sharply, and surely, and when he gave up moralizing in favor of sheer observation, he could report accurately on the scene around him. I liked most such pieces as "The New Hat" and "Seeing New York—The Skyscraper," in which his capacity for observation is best exploited.

GIACOMETTI, now around fifty, has become since the war one of Italy's foremost modern sculptors, with a style and a plastic approach that are peculiarly his own. His forms, as I have suggested, are as thin as strings, and since his surfaces are deliberately rough and uneven, one's first impression of his work is likely to be that it is hastily and carelessly put together. His, however, is an art designed preëminently to conceal art, and if one looks more closely, one perceives that when exact details are needed, he can render them with miniaturistic skill. I had a feeling that the show at the Matisse, which contains a small group of oils as well as sculptures and drawings for sculptures, didn't quite reach the level of imaginative force that his show of two years ago displayed. But in pieces like "Head with Shoulders," "Long Head," and the charming "Two Houses" (glass-enclosed ones, with a walking figure between), he achieves a mixture of airy lightness and sound sculptural balance that is gratifying indeed.

HEDDA STERNE, who first caught my eye a few years ago with her pictures of fanciful shopwindows, has a group of new paintings at the Betty Parsons, in company with the work of a young Texan, a newcomer to New York, named Forrest Bess. The Bess pictures, small, deliberately naïve, and stylized, are so simplified in design that it's difficult at times to get much meaning out of them. But he has a gift for a wry symbolism, and I have a notion that if he continues, his work may become much more powerful. I liked "The Bull," somehow Indian in its suggestion; "Prophesy;" and the more colorful "Mind Crystal."

Miss Sterne's work has grown both in size and in content since I first saw it, and a number of the items in her show—among them "Airport No. 1," with its swirling design, and the dark, slightly sinister "Night"—seemed to me about as well realized artistically as such subjects could be. I liked, too, her "Third Avenue," full of shadows and shop lights, as well as the bolder and blockier "Tower No. 2," and if at times (as in "Blimp" and "Machine—1950") her attack seems thin and capricious, there is always an underlying feeling of good taste and ironic good humor, curiously feminine in quality.

—ROBERT M. COATES

MANGEURS DE SPAGHETTI

BECAUSE the Owens were to begin their European tour in Sicily, the international automobile agency in New York whose services they had availed themselves of gave them, along with the necessary documents, Italian license plates for their Ford, which they were to take with them on the ship. A few days before they left, in February, Mr. Owen put the Italian plates in the trunk of the car, thinking that he would have them attached on the dock at Palermo. But the ship arrived at that port twelve hours late, and in the rainy, chilly, dark confusion of a 3 A.M. Sicilian winter landing, there were more pressing things to think about than plates.

For one thing, it turned out that Mrs. Owen's portable radio had to be surrendered to the customs authorities, in exchange for a mass of receipts and other papers that, in turn, a few days later, were to be exchanged, along with a several-thousand-lira deposit, for the radio and still other papers—these last, it seemed, to be exchanged, at the Owens' eventual exit point in Italy, for a return of the deposit, minus certain fixed charges. The first step in this chain of transactions consumed considerable time in those early-morning hours in the Palermo customs shed. Furthermore, although the international automobile agency's Palermo representative was on the dock, as the office in New York had promised (despite, as he virtuously pointed out, the barbarity of the hour and of the weather), for the clearance of the car's papers, he had neglected to bring with him any gasoline. Of course, he asserted with dignity when Mr. Owen ironically questioned him on this point, he was perfectly aware that even American automobiles cannot drive away from docks without gasoline, and he was perfectly aware also that fuel tanks are emptied for transatlantic crossings. But his responsibility extended only to the car's papers; as to gasoline—no, he had to confess, with regret, that he had no idea where it could be procured in Palermo at that hour. Fortunately, this ignorance was not shared by two dark young men in a truck, with whom Mr. Owen had earlier seen the international representative conversing. The pair descended from the truck at this point, joined the discussion, and revealed that they knew the whereabouts of some gasoline and would be glad to fetch it, warning Mr. Owen, however, that because of the hour the price would be a trifle higher than usual. Somewhat hesitantly, he handed them the number of lire they demanded. They drove off, and half an hour later returned bearing a can whose contents, Mr. Owen later calculated, cost him some three or four times the normal Italian price of eighty cents a gallon. And, it seemed, this amount did not include the gratuity to which the young men menacingly declared themselves entitled. A similar claim for financial recognition of services rendered was confidently advanced by the representative of the international automobile agency.

What with all these happenings, and a number of others like them, Mr. Owen did not think to have the Italian license plates attached to the car on the dock. They remained unattached, unthought of, during the Owens' several weeks in Sicily and Italy. Wherever they drove, the beauty of their *macchina di lusso* was hailed with rapture. In every Sicilian village there was a crowd of ill-dressed, lounging young men, apparently unemployed and clearly too poor even to smoke—the Owens never saw one of them with a cigarette; but far from resenting the car's luxury, they invariably gave enthusiastic evidence, in delighted smiles, shouts, and gestures, that their brief view of the Ford as it passed along their main street was a high point of their day. At Naples, a suspicious customs official demanded that the car's engine number be pointed out to him; otherwise how would he know that the car described in Mr. Owen's documents and the car Mr. Owen was driving were one and the same? Red-faced after a long search, Mr. Owen had to confess that the location of the engine number of his own car was unknown to him. The official, amused by such ignorance, and failing likewise to find the number, waved the Owens on. Nowhere—not in Rome or Florence or any of the northern cities and towns of Italy—did a policeman ever ask whether the Ford, bearing its single New York plate at the rear, was properly equipped with Italian or international registration. No one, apparently, cared. At the busy border station of Ventimiglia, the customs official laughed heartily at his Palermitan colleagues when he was confronted with the mass of papers concerning Mrs. Owen's radio. "Fine work!" he said jeeringly. "They do things right in the provinces. If we paid any attention to that crazy law about radios here, we'd never get

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our work done." The radio deposit, minus the fixed charges, was quickly refunded, and no one asked about the car's license plates.

IN France, however, things were slightly different—not in southern France, which is Italianate in respect to automobiles, as in other ways, but farther north. At the very moment of the Owens' entry into Paris, at the Porte d'Italie, they were stopped by a traffic policeman, who politely pointed out that they lacked a front license plate. Mr. Owen explained that each one of the forty-eight *Etats-Unis* made its own motor-vehicle laws, and that the State of New York in 1950 issued rear plates only—a device that had resulted in a *grosse économie de métal.* The policeman nodded approvingly at these words and remarked that the *économie* would be still greater if New York were to follow the French practice, and didn't go to the needless, wasteful expense of changing plates annually; also, he said, there was an undoubted conflict, which seemed unresolvable, between the New York failure to provide front plates and the French law, which required that all vehicles carry them. Mr. Owen agreed that the conflict was indeed unresolvable, and Mrs. Owen smilingly asked that mercy be extended to the victims of such legislative contradiction; the policeman returned her smile and waved them on. Several other times, in and around Paris, during the next week or two, policemen stopped the car, politely called attention to the lack of a front plate, and as politely accepted Mr. Owen's explanation. Then, one day, he belatedly remembered the Italian plates that had been lying in the trunk since New York, and, removing the single New York plate, attached them himself one morning, outside his hotel.

The substitution of the Italian license plates, although it put an end to conversations concerning the peculiar habits of the State of New York, did not bring with it totally happy motoring. The first person to remark the presence of the Italian plates was the manager of the Owens' garage. "*Comment?*" he challenged Mr. Owen one evening. "In America, do you have the habit of casually changing your license plates at will? Not in France, I assure you; here a man's license plates are an integral part of his—or at least of his car's—*papiers d'identité,* and are not tampered with lightly. Imagine my amazement when I suddenly discover that, without my being informed, one of the vehicles sheltered in my garage has silently changed not only the number but the very na-

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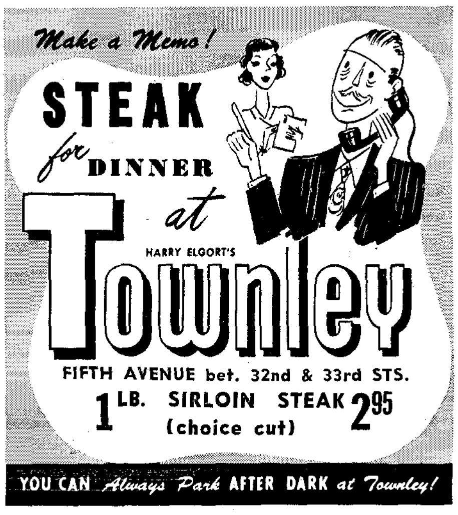
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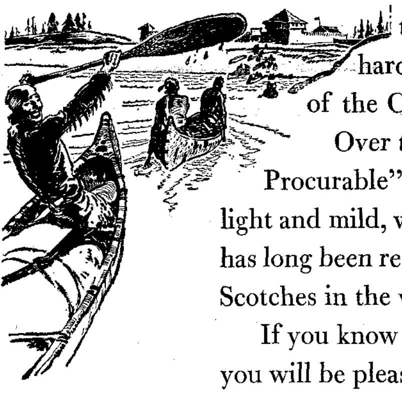
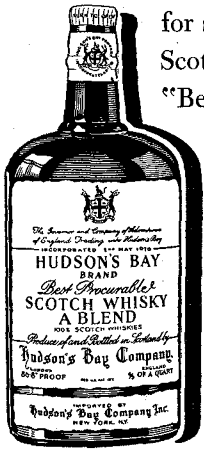
tionality of its plates! What confusion to my records! I am astonished, Monsieur, at your lack of *politesse* in not giving me warning of your intention, or at least notifying me of the step you had taken." Mr. Owen apologized humbly, for garage space was tight in Paris, and he knew he was lucky to have been admitted to an establishment so near his hotel. "All right, all right," the manager grumbled, "but if someday an American whim takes you to put on Chinese license plates, have the kindness to bring the fact to my attention, rather than allow me to come dangerously close to apoplexy."

In addition to the two oblong number plates, the Italian insignia included a second rear plate, oval, bearing a large letter "I"—the conventional indication that a visiting car had been disembarked and registered in Italy. The Owens' oval initial plate was a remnant from prewar stocks; besides the large "I," it bore, in smaller letters, the legend "RACI" (standing for the Italian equivalent of "Royal Automobile Club of Italy") and, smaller still but unmistakable, a crown and fasces. It was not long before these details began to be noticed, and the Owens were treated to derisive cries of "*Raci! Raci!*" "*Vive le roi!*," "*Vive Mussolini!*" and sometimes, depending on whether the yell was from Italians resident in Paris or from Frenchmen who had fought in Italy, a full-throated "*Duce! Duce! Duce!*" or a heavily scornful "*Credere, obbedire, combattere!*" The Owens also received, in the jungle of Paris traffic, the imprecations of French motorists who objected not to the royal or Fascist emblems but merely to Mr. Owen's cautious mode of driving, and who found in the nationality proclaimed by the "I" a convenient target for their indignation. The cries of these motorists, as they impatiently swerved their vehicles past the Ford or honked their klaxons with fury, usually took the form of "*Mangeurs de spaghetti!*" or "*Allez manger vos macaroni chez vous, mon Dieu!*" On one occasion, when Mr. Owen, confused by what seemed to be contradictory signals given by two adjacent traffic policemen, drove ahead at an intersection when he should have waited, one of the policemen called after him paternally, as though to a daughter, "*Alors, Italia—doucement, hein?*"

IN the summer, the Owens set out for Venice, and it was en route, halfway up the ascent of the French side of the Mont Cenis pass, when the Ford overheated and had to be driven off the road to cool, that the deri-





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sion came the thickest. All kinds of tiny French cars, many of them quite old, were making the long climb with ease. As they passed the imposing but stationary Ford, their occupants delivered themselves of everything from "*Mangeurs de nouilles!*" and "After all, who can blame Italians for wanting to stay in France?" to the mournful epitaph uttered by a bearded young intellectual, very Saint-Germain-des-Prés in appearance, who passed by in a Gallic jalopy: "Symbol of the decadence of empire!"

By now, the Owens, weary of being the butt of such constant wit, and weary also, despite their love of Italy and things Italian, of having their nationality constantly confused with that of their license plates, were determined that before their return to France they would reattach their single New York plate, but in Venice, as it happened, the provocation for jeers about royalty and the Duce was removed. The Ford was stored in the huge garage at the Venetian end of the causeway from the mainland, and there, one morning, when the Owens went to get their car for a day's excursion into the Dolomites, they discovered that the oval plate, with its "I," its "RACI," and its crown and fasces, was gone; it had been roughly torn off. The foreman in charge, when Mr. Owen spoke to him of the loss, expressed polite regret that such depredation should occur on his premises, but he was clearly not surprised, and no more unhappy than Mr. Owen himself was. "It was one that dated from the old regime, as I recall," he said. "Well, you know we workingmen are very republican here in Venice. Somebody's feelings got the better of him. Let me give you a nice, new, democratic plate, with the compliments of the garage." Very quickly, he produced and had attached a new initial plate—not oval, this time, but square, and bearing an "I" and nothing more.

The Owens' way back to Paris took them through Cannes. One velvety dark night, they drove the Ford out along the jetty, parked alongside the row of yachts and sailboats moored there, and turned out the head lamps to watch the lights of the harbor and of the Croisette. Mr. Owen got out to smoke a cigar; Mrs. Owen remained in her seat. As Mr. Owen smoked, a man's form approached. He walked up to Mr. Owen and stopped, his face all but invisible in the dark. Clearly unaware of Mrs. Owen's presence a few feet away, the newcomer inquired, in slightly accented French, whether Mr. Owen would care to make the acquaintance of

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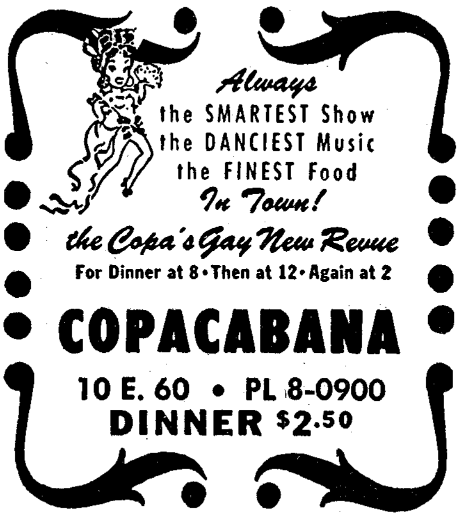
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some girls. A masculine discussion ensued, with details concerning ages, types, and prices requested and supplied. Suddenly, Mrs. Owen—she explained to her husband later that it was because she disliked hearing him raise a businessman's hopes on false pretenses—snapped on the parking lights, which automatically illuminated the lights on the dashboard. The young pimp—the parking lights revealed him to be young, dark, and shabbily dressed—gave a start, perceived simultaneously the Italian license plate on the front of the car and Mrs. Owen's silhouette, and burst out into profuse, anguished Italian apologies. "To think that I, an Italian, should by unhappy accident have subjected the ears of an Italian lady to such details as those!" he cried. "Can the Signora forgive me, and be assured of my complete and wholehearted respect?" Mrs. Owen replied, in French, that she certainly forgave him, even though she was of American nationality, and, walking over to the car, he earnestly declared, once more in French, "Nationality makes no difference in what I now wish to say. I wish to assure Monsieur and Madame that this is not my true profession. I have another profession, an honorable one, but it has fallen on evil days. I am a *forain*"—he meant that he worked in travelling country fairs—"but fairs are fewer than they used to be, work is scarce, and I am obliged to follow this unhappy calling in which you see me."

"What do you do when you are with a fair?" Mrs. Owen inquired.

The young man replied, "*Je m'occupe du carrousel* [I have charge of the merry-go-round], *parce que j'adore les bébés.*"

Then, with handshakes, cordial good nights, and renewed assurances of his most heartfelt regrets, he disappeared into the dark.

BACK in Paris, the Owens' Ford, still bearing its Italian plates, continued to give rise to occasional angry cries of "*Mangeurs de spaghetti!*" on the boulevards. Now, however, because summer was over and Mr. Owen was much occupied with business and used the car but little, and because Mrs. Owen did not care to cope with Paris traffic, it was driven for her by Georges, a young Parisian chauffeur. He was an aggressive native of the district of Belleville, a nativity that carries with it an accent roughly the equivalent of that of Brownsville, in Brooklyn. He was not at all anti-Italian; he had been an admirer of Garry Davis and described himself to his new employers as an "internationalist." Precisely for

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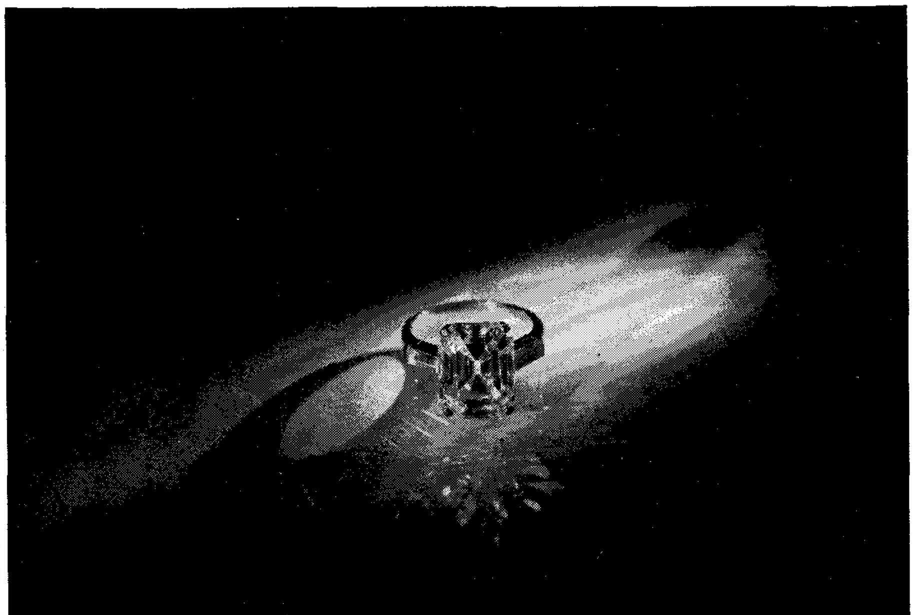

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this reason, he explained, and not because he objected to being taken for an Italian, he considered it his duty to rebuke any nationalistic compatriot who stupidly employed "*Mangeurs de spaghetti!*" as an insult. No longer, with Georges at the wheel, were the epithets entirely on one side. "*Mangeurs de bifteck et de pommes frites, comme moi!*" he would call back, in purest Belleville tones, to astonished Frenchmen who had execrated him for some flaw in his driving, and doubtless expected to be replied to, if at all, in the broken accents of Milan or Rome. "*Salaud!*" or "*Espèce de paysan!*" would then come the riposte, when it was realized that the insulter was, after all, merely a Frenchman, like the insulted; by this time, Georges had usually forgotten the original issue of internationalism and lapsed into Belleville terms of abuse, whose meaning, he freely confessed to Mrs. Owen, it was better she should not know. Several times, she pointed out the impropriety of his behavior, but he seemed unable to break himself of the habit of replying. "*Malheureusement, Madame, je n'avale pas facilement les injures,*" he told her. Therefore, particularly since the time was anyway now rapidly approaching when she and her husband would drive to Le Havre to embark themselves and the car for New York, she decided that, in the interests of nonvituperative Parisian motoring, the single New York plate should be restored. Georges looked downcast as she gave him the order; clearly the verbal duels ranging from high internationalism to local patois had been the great pleasure of his job.

On one of the Owens' last days in Paris, Mrs. Owen and Georges were stopped near the Madeleine by one of the city's few English-speaking traffic policemen. He asked, in excellent English, what she expected him to ask—the old question about why the front license plate was missing. She gave her explanation, and the policeman politely told them to proceed. The young internationalist, whose resentment of this interference by the law had been quite evident on his face, uttered an expression of scorn as they drove off. "*Comédien!*" he said with a sneer. "Always acting, *les flics*. Couldn't he talk French, like anybody else?"

—FRANCIS STEEGMULLER

•

The program Mr. Truman wants is pretty well known. It includes a $4 billion excess profits tax on corporations, rent control extension, statehood for Alabama and . . . —*Pensacola (Fla.) News.*

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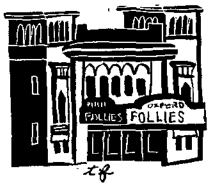
THE CURRENT CINEMA

Orson's Cauldron



IN many ways, Orson Welles' movie version of "Macbeth" is an interesting commodity. As Mr. Welles has it, the castle of Dunsinane is a pile so cold, dank, and dark that it makes a Siberian salt mine seem hospitable, and it is populated—as is the rest of the Scotland here depicted—by an alarming collection of Highland citizens, most of whom loom up on the screen in a tangle of rope hair, sinister whiskers, disorganized burlap smocks, untailored tartans, ill-fitting iron hats, and the sort of facial makeup that was hot stuff back in the days of "Orphans of the Storm." In the central role, Mr. Welles looks a good deal more like a Tatar headman than a royal Scot, but he compensates for this alien note to some degree by uttering his noble lines in a kind of brogue that may, for all I know, be a reasonable imitation of the way Scots used to talk. It's a bit remote, though, from any language familiar to most cinema audiences of today, and I'm afraid that communication between Mr. Welles and his public is going to be hellishly confused in the course of this "Macbeth."

There can be no doubt that in tackling this part Mr. Welles, who also produced and directed the film, was determined not to let it get the best of him. He approaches Macbeth's awful problems with the hearty vigor athletic directors display when confronting a new class in calisthenics, and he's still in there shouting when Birnam Wood has come to Dunsinane and Macduff (Dan O'Herlihy) is busy trying to chop his head off with a dedicated sword. In contrast to Mr. Welles' robust protagonist, Lady Macbeth, played by a newcomer named Jeanette Nolan, seems rather suburban, even when she's practically awash in blood. Since Mr. Welles made this film for Republic Pictures, which specializes in dramas of the cow country, he has made sure that some of his sponsor's horses get a workout every now and then, and he hasn't hesitated to give the whole production a slam-bang quality, which probably wasn't exactly what Shakespeare had in mind but nevertheless makes for lively going, at least part of the time. For some reason, Mr. Welles has let his cast decide individually whether or not to follow him in his efforts to fabricate a new kind of Scottish tongue. About half of them are of the Harry Lauder school; the rest give up cold on trying to produce a burr. It certainly makes for some strange readings of the Bard.

BING CROSBY, always an entertaining man to have around, almost succeeds in making "Mr. Music" a sprightly affair, but in the long pull the weakness of the material becomes too much for even the redoubtable crooner, and the thing drifts downhill sadly. The plot, which is based vaguely on Samson Raphaelson's "Accent on Youth," has to do with a musical-comedy composer who hates work so much that his producer (Charles Coburn) hires an efficient and toothsome young lady (Nancy Olson) to see to it that he gets his scores done. Eventually, as in most of these musical entries, there's a climactic production number, but the tunes it incorporates are hardly memorable.

—JOHN MCCARTEN

•

TO A MARTINI

Oh, some there be of baser breed,
Of heavy-handed flagrance,
Who drench, forsooth, with dry
vermouth
The juniper's fair fragrance.

Yes, some there be mix two to three
This benefice from heaven.
Dull clods! Give me the lavish lad
Who pours in one to seven.

Then stir the clinking ice that cools
This thirst and spirit slaker
Until a gentle, misty frost
Bedews the crystal shaker.

I know that some put onions in,
And others olives favor.
Poor fools, they miss the crowning
grace,
The rind-of-lemon flavor.

Then sip with grateful reverence,
Its savor soft, caressing,
And praise the gods on high who gave
Unworthy man this blessing.

—NEWMAN LEVY

•

Dr. and Mrs. W. Reed Wood in all their married lives never really had a home until they came to Greensboro four years ago, what with longtime army wandering which meant a move almost every year. So it didn't matter much that Sammy was a Baptist and Reed a Christian.—*Greensboro (N. C.) Daily Record.*

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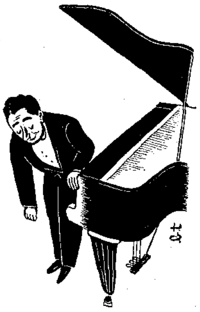
MUSICAL EVENTS

A Romp at the Met



THERE are probably enough admirable things about the Metropolitan Opera's shiny new production, in English, of "Die Fledermaus," excellently conducted by Eugene Ormandy, to make it worth your while, and yet the many talented people who have brought about this latest revival of Johann Strauss's most popular operetta have failed to get it entirely off the ground. There is a certain unwieldiness about it, attributable partly, perhaps, to the fact that a theatre the size of the Met must do the thing on such a tremendous scale, and partly to the lack of a distinctive flavor. Lord knows, the conceit of the old version—a reduction to absurdity of the artificial social life of a mid-European city in 1874, pointed up by means of mistaken identity—would be hard enough to bring off today under the most felicitous circumstances. In the new version, there are disturbing anachronisms of idiom in both the libretto, by Garson Kanin, who also staged the revival (and smartly), and the lyrics, by Howard Dietz. For example, at one point Prince Orlofsky is made to say, "Wha' hoppen?" There are several other doubtful witticisms, like "With his high voice and my high spirits, what a high old time we had," and "Do you all know one another?," "They all know *two* another," and "Don't be fresh, Frosch." Dietz's lyrics frequently strive to be too clever, but in their simpler moments they have the right spirit and make a valid contribution to the presentation.

Besides the sluggishness of the story and the signs of strain in the remodelled text and lyrics, there are a few other shortcomings I feel compelled to mention. Ljuba Welitch, the Rosalinda, and Set Svanholm, who played Eisenstein, are artful singing actors, but their command of English is much too weak for them to cope with spoken lines that are supposed to be understood. And the ballet in the second-act ballroom scene, during which you encounter some of the most emphatic waltz music in the show, is too determinedly graceful and restrained for its purpose, and takes all the fun out of the party. After all, the scene was obviously intended to be an apotheosis of the gaiety of the period, and it is no time for holding back. Finally, two of Rolf Gerard's three settings struck me as being rather unimaginative and weak in color, like the thin daubs in a child's watercolor book; only the first one appealed to me.

In addition to Ormandy's appreciative reading of the melodious score, the performance was praiseworthy in other ways. Patrice Munsel, in the role of the chambermaid who gets dolled up and goes to the ball, stole the show. She and Richard Tucker (as "Alfred, a wild oat") were the most vocally persuasive members of the entire cast, both of them singing brilliantly and getting every word out clearly. Tucker had a nice light touch in his acting, and Miss Munsel, in two captivating numbers—the second-act "Look Me Over Once or Twice" and the celebrated third-act acting demonstration—proved herself to be a lovely and highly accomplished comedienne. Miss Welitch's soprano unaccountably grew weaker as the evening went along, until, at the end, she was scarcely audible, but otherwise her interpretation of Rosalinda was a neat job, impudent and cynical. I did think she took the whole thing *too* lightly, though, so that at times she appeared to be almost out of the show and flitting about in an aloof world of her own. Svanholm's insistent Swedish accent gave him and me a good deal of trouble, but he was an appealing Eisenstein and played the part with zest. Risë Stevens, who has been assuming young men's roles around the Met for a long while now, was a stunning prince and an uncommonly convincing one. I could understand everything she said, even through the thick Russian accent she employed, and I didn't notice her falter once in her use of masculine gestures. Jack Gilford, a Broadway comedian making his Met début, as the drunken jailer whose antics are expected to enliven the beginning of the third act, gave a fine low-comedy performance.

—DOUGLAS WATT

•

> Hutton said he has occasionally run into brunettes with a redhead's mind, and vice versa. with boiling water, let them stand for about five minutes, then drain and slip off the skins. Put them on a towel and pat them dry. Then freshen them in the oven—it takes about 15 minutes at 300 degrees.
>
> —*Detroit News.*

We haven't *got* fifteen minutes.

OF ALL THINGS

WESTERN Europeans are heartened by the appointment of General Eisenhower to command their combined forces, but the Germans are less enthusiastic. For some reason, Ike is not included among their happy memories.

•

The grave question has arisen as to what should be done with our national government in case of an atomic war. Should we scatter it about the country or try to drive it underground?

•

All those atom-smashing experiments, it is now revealed, have proved that the physicists' theories about the construction of the universe were wrong. It becomes clearer every day that the atom was opened by mistake.

•

Representative John E. Rankin demands a recount of the whole 1950 census because, as things are now, Mississippi stands to lose one seat in Congress. He would probably be surprised to know how courageously many of his fellows on the other side of the House would face this disaster.

•

The Chinese Communist delegation to the United Nations remained Orientally mystifying to the end. As they left for home, they denounced us bitterly and wished us a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

•

Reports have it that Margaret Truman has been offered a handsome radio-and-television contract. Fortunately for Miss Truman's peace of mind, her appointment would not have to be submitted to the Senate.

•

The good people of Tarrytown and South Nyack are unhappy to learn that the Thruway bridge approaches are to be built on the very spots where they are trying to live. Like all other dwellers up and down the banks of the Hudson, they feel that the proper place for this great public improvement is elsewhere.

•

The American Communist Party laments the fact that its dues-paying membership is falling off. What makes it worse is that there was never much membership to fall off from.

—HOWARD BRUBAKER

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LETTER FROM LAKE SUCCESS

DECEMBER 21

SIR BENEGAL RAU's cease-fire committee has announced that it will go on trying to stop the shooting in Korea, but for most people here—even, perhaps, Sir Benegal himself—the hope of negotiating an early settlement with Communist China flew off on the plane that is taking General Wu Hsiu-chuan, his friends, and their short ton of American gadgetry back to Peiping, via Moscow. The committee may, by some miracle, succeed in its efforts, but the biggest job confronting most delegations, and in particular our own, is negotiating a settlement of the differences between the United States and her fellow non-Communist powers that developed, or were intensified, during the debates over the various cease-fire proposals. Thanks largely to the bad temper and abusiveness with which the Russians and the Communist Chinese greeted each new formula, these differences no longer appear as serious or as difficult to reconcile as they did a couple of weeks ago, when a half hour in the broadloomed, alcohol-scented Tower of Babel called the Delegates Lounge gave one the distressing conviction that most of the civilized world felt American intransigence to be of the very same stuff as Communist intransigence. By swallowing hard and agreeing to go along with part of the peace plan worked out by Sir Benegal and his Asian and Arab colleagues, Ambassador Austin managed to transfer some of the ill feeling toward us to the Russians, who—stupidly, in the view of most people—opposed the resolution calling for the creation of a committee to investigate the possible conditions for a cease-fire, a resolution that carried with it no conceivable danger to their position. Although the Russian failure to pick up a few shares of good will at bargain prices improved our position slightly, it is, nevertheless, a fact that the Chinese military attack on the United Nations forces, which might have been expected to bolster the unity of the nations represented by those forces, has instead revealed an extremely grave division among them.

Although it approximates the truth to say that the division is between the United States, on the one hand, and the rest of the non-Communist world, on the other, the situation is more complicated than that. We do have a few thoroughgoing supporters. One of them, Nationalist China, is a highly questionable asset and another, the Philippine Republic, is of doubtful stability, but they and others, among them Greece, Turkey, and certain Latin-American countries, do relieve us from the embarrassment of total isolation. Moreover, not all the powers that are openly dissatisfied with our position go quite as far in the other direction as the Indians, who, though they disclaim a belief in peace at any price, seem willing to meet Chinese demands that a good many observers consider inordinately stiff. The United Kingdom and Canada stand about midway between us and the Indians, and the French about midway between the Indians and the Commonwealth nations. The important thing, though, is that whereas once it seemed natural to class a delegation according to its view of "the Russian problem," it has now become necessary to class it also according to its view of "the American problem" (a phrase newly minted here) and by the degree of its resistance to American leadership. The position of the "middle-ground" nations—those that look upon Russian and American influence with equal, or nearly equal, repugnance and hold us as responsible as the Chinese for the breakdown of negotiations—has been greatly strengthened and the position of the United States proportionately weakened. Still, it by no means follows that the Russians are the gainers, for unless one believes that all diplomatic wisdom has been vested in us and that the American point of view is the only tenable one, one must admit that the anti-Communist cause might be strengthened, rather than weakened, by the emergence of some new leadership. Naturally, this is the argument of those who feel that it is called for. But until new leadership has been established or American leadership restored, the situation at Lake Success will be very much to the Russians' liking and not at all to anybody else's.

"Would it be worth a dime to you to see my face light up?"

To anyone trying to determine at Lake Success the causes of our present difficulties with our allies, it soon becomes apparent that they arise from wholly different conceptions of recent Asiatic history. While our government has never denied the possibility, or the desirability, of Communist China's eventually becoming as independent of the Soviet Union as Communist Yugoslavia appears to be, it has held that the burden of proof is on the Chinese Communists—that it is common sense to consider a Communist state guilty of being a satellite until it has shown itself to be innocent. It is because our government considers China merely a Russian adjunct that our diplomats have been defending our refusal to be bound by the Cairo Declaration, which promised the return of

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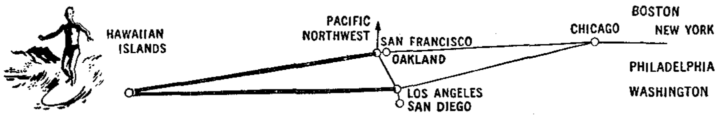
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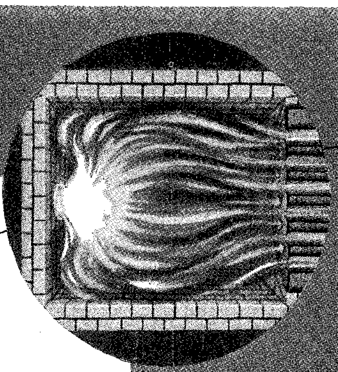

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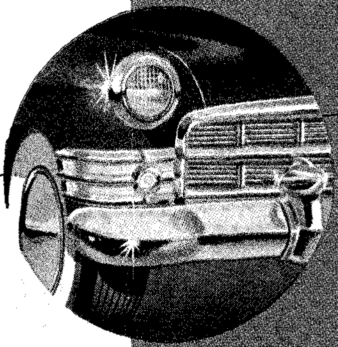

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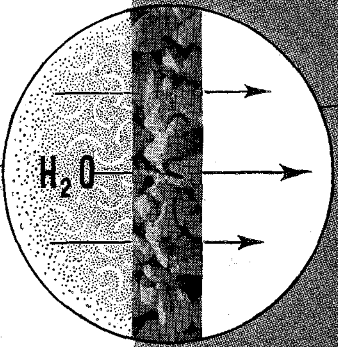

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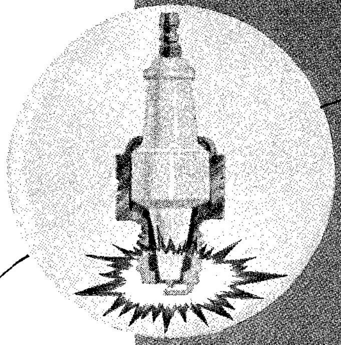

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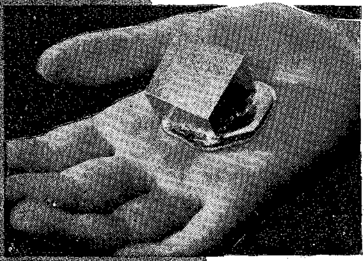

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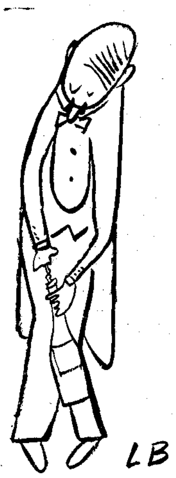
Formosa to China. To allow Mao Tse-tung's troops to occupy the island, our diplomats say, would be not to return it to China but to hand it over to deputies of Moscow. (The fact that we have relaxed our position on Formosa somewhat and may relax it further does not mean that our government has seen any error in its reasoning; it means only that it has recognized the perils of unilateral action and has prudently reappraised the consequences of war with half a billion people.) Most of the other delegations take just the opposite view. They regard our reasoning as textbook formalism, unworthy of our pragmatic traditions. Maintaining that Lord Acton's words about the corruptive nature of power apply even to the flintiest Bolshevik, they say it is nonsense to suppose that a revolutionary party that has spent twenty-five hard years gaining control for itself will automatically yield all its authority to another nation, and especially when the nation it has won control of has more than twice the population of the other; it is reasonable enough to say that Communist Albania can never be anything but a satellite, but it is another story to say it of China. Furthermore, they argue that while flattery may not be as potent a corrupter as power, it has been known to help, and that even if our view that China is totally subservient to Moscow is the true one, we would stand a better chance of bringing about a change if we appeared to believe her independent.

Those who say that no mere revolution would make a country the size of China surrender her national interests and national pride have not been persuaded to revise their opinions by General Wu's shrill performances before the Security Council, nor is their confidence shaken by Communist China's continued pursuit of the United Nations forces in Korea. Indeed, in the very ferocity of that attack, which to our delegates seems evidence that marionette wires run from Moscow to Peiping, they see a possible demonstration of Peiping's independence. It is obviously Stalin's fondest hope, they say, to draw us by easy stages into a war on the Chinese mainland, but Mao Tse-tung's strategy seems intended to get us off the Asian mainland as speedily as an army of five million can drive us off. In other words, they argue, our trouble with Mao is caused not by his refusing to become a Tito but by his already being one—and with a vengeance. A circumstance cited in support of this notion is that Moscow and Peiping tell very different stories about the Chinese troops in Korea. The Chinese appear to have pretty well abandoned their line about "volunteers" fighting Wall Street in Yangyang, and through their official newspapers and broadcasts are calling for public sacrifice and support in what they more and more often speak of as a "war effort." In Moscow and here at Lake Success, however, the Russians have never ceased to make it plain that they regard the Chinese combatants as commendable young men who took private decisions to enlist in a cause that aroused their idealism. To those who believe that a conflict of interests between Peiping and Moscow already exists, the reason for the conflict in propaganda lines seems perfectly clear: Moscow is pledged by a mutual-assistance pact to come to the aid of Peiping in the event of war; the Chinese, eager to get a little more help in kicking us out of Korea, are needling the Russians by calling the engagement in Korea a war; and Moscow, which is not entirely pleased with what the Chinese are up to, insists on keeping the "volunteer" pretense alive to avoid paying Peiping off.



Whether Moscow and Peiping see eye to eye on everything would seem to be a debating point that should have little effect on the unity of the non-Communist powers in the United Nations, but the fact is that the question has an immense effect on everyone's thinking. Our delegation warns against the "appeasement" of Peiping, but other delegations contend that the word has no proper application in this discussion, since the concessions to Communist China that they propose and we oppose—such as admission to the United Nations and the return of Formosa—would mean merely granting to a great power the rights that its importance in the world entitles it to. Some of the Asian delegations add that the steps we so tiresomely insist on describing as appeasement are steps that most of Asia would regard as a recognition of Asian equality, and that if we want more friends in Asia, we had better start this kind of appeasement fast. We object to "rewarding aggression," but they reply that the Chinese intervention is aggression only to those who refuse to admit that China has a legitimate concern with the se-

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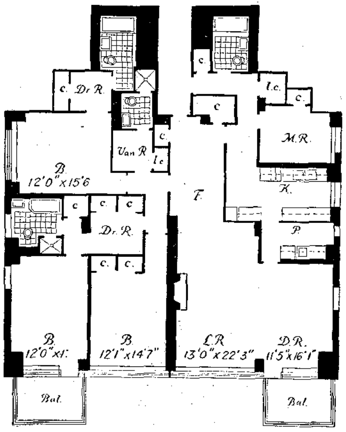

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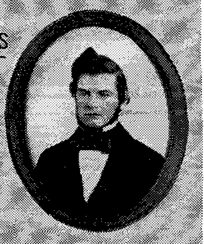

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curity of her frontiers and that we can hardly expect her to be impressed by the fact that the troops she opposes in Korea fight under the standard of the United Nations as long as she is denied participation in the United Nations. And as for Formosa, the self-appointed defenders of that island enjoy the sanction only of the government that is preventing Communist China's admission to the United Nations.

In the face of this criticism, our delegation is not exactly tongue-tied. It can—and does—point out that the contention that Peiping is acting in accordance with her own national interests is every bit as much in the realm of theory as our contention that it is acting as a Russian agent. The evidence either way is far from conclusive, but the behavior of General Wu, who at Lake Success spoke the Mandarin dialect but employed an idiom that never came out of China, certainly favors our view. Our delegation also points out that the nations that have recognized Communist China have got precious little thanks for it. British Foreign Office men in China have had as hard a time obtaining audiences with government officials as our State Department had trying to make contact with the Wu entourage. India, in return for all she has done to aid the Peiping government, has got the Chinese annexation of Tibet and a flood of Communist propaganda denouncing Premier Nehru as an enemy of the oppressed masses. The French, who have not yet recognized Peiping but who have been friendlier to Communist China than we have been, have been rewarded with the massing of Chinese troops on the Viet Nam border. A few of our people have even been bold enough to suggest to the Asians that our record in Asia is nothing we need be terribly ashamed of—that India's freedom may be at least partly due to American prodding of the British; that while our freeing of the Philippines was not an act of unmixed magnanimity, it was one of the first voluntary relinquishments of colonial power in history; and that, though our Chinese-immigration policies have not been exemplary, we set a precedent of some sort by returning indemnity funds paid us after the Boxer Rebellion. Our delegation has also argued that if the United Nations is to accept at face value what China says about the security of her frontiers, it might just as well adopt a tolerant and understanding attitude toward a Russian attack on Yugoslavia. As a kind of clincher, our people make the point that while it may finally turn out that Peiping

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is not a true satellite of Moscow, the safest course for the free world is to assume that she is and to limit her expansion as much as it is possible to limit it. If we acted on the assumption that she is not a satellite and it turned out that she is, it would be a bit too late to avoid the consequences of the wrong guess.

For as long as negotiations with Peiping remain a question to be taken up in an uncertain future, the differences between our views and those of other non-Communist delegations will affect only a few live issues, though they will, of course, continue to be a source of irritation and exacerbation. But if Peiping and Moscow ask for a new series of talks, or if a deteriorating military situation in Korea leads other countries to ask that negotiations be resumed on the terms laid down by the Communists, the disagreements will increase. Most people here feel reasonably confident that the disagreements will in the end be overcome, for there is probably no delegation outside the Communist bloc that would sacrifice the unity of the United Nations by insisting on its own formula for the settlement of this particular question. If our own delegation were convinced that the only way to preserve unity is to go more than halfway to meet the majority, it would unquestionably do so, with whatever good grace it could muster. But conflicts as deep as this one can be resolved only at heavy cost. The cost of bringing the American position more nearly into line with the others would be a great weakening of support for the United Nations in this country. The cost of our asking other nations to bring their position into line with ours would be an intensifying of their resentment of us, because they would feel they were being asked to mollify what they regard as the isolationist minority in America.

THESE have been trying days here at Lake Success, and although there is general agreement that the problems posed by the Chinese intervention will not be allowed to destroy the United Nations, there is also a realization that no matter who yields what, the organization may be approaching the end of its effective existence. No one rates the chances of averting a general war at better than fifty-fifty, and it has been felt all along that the organization could not survive a war between the great powers. Its name might be used for another international organization, and some of its auxiliary agencies might remain intact, but the structure most of us think of as the United Nations was not built to

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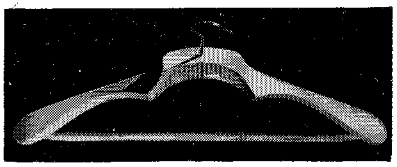

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endure the defection of either the Soviet Union or the United States. Anticipating the worst and attempting to see beyond it, some of the more reflective observers here profess to believe that even if the United Nations should be wrecked by a war, its existence for five difficult years has demonstrated (as the League of Nations never did) the feasibility of international organization. The idea of coöperation, these people say, has at last attained enough prestige in the world to force even the most obdurate of powers to pay it tribute, and the very fact that the Russians and their satellites have always tried to justify their actions not in terms of the peculiar dogmas that for them encompass all truth but in terms of the United Nations Charter is proof of this. It is clear that the Russians value the United Nations chiefly as a forum with a global amplifying system, but the point being made here is that they use the forum not so much to disseminate their own philosophy as to advance the fiction that they are the only true adherents of a different, better one. Just as Communist pretensions to democracy measure the continuing force of that idea, so the volume of Communist rhetoric in the Security Council and the General Assembly is a measure of the moral authority the United Nations Charter has acquired.

It may be cold comfort right now to hear that what the United Nations lacks in political and military power it partly makes up for in the morals line, but there are men here who believe that several of the arguments for international organization have been vindicated. For one thing, the response of the United Nations to the aggression in Korea last June, while it did not prove that the collective-security principle would prevent war, did prove that sovereign nations could act together to apply the principle and test it. A fact that has not been so widely appreciated is that another condition of successful international organization—the surrender by sovereign nations of some of their sovereignty—has been realized in a very remarkable fashion. Whether or not the United Nations acted wisely in instructing its command in Korea to refrain from bombing Manchurian supply bases, the concurrence of the United States in that order and General MacArthur's obedience to it represent what is probably the largest and certainly the most dramatic surrender of sovereignty in the history of national states. It is one thing for nations to adjust their criminal codes or even their tariff systems for the attainment of some supra-national end, but it is quite another for a beleaguered army to restrain itself from taking the sort of defensive steps that have for centuries been military reflexes and that have always been justified on the ground of self-defense—the ground on which nearly all societies justify the taking of human life. Eleven years ago, when the arms embargo in the Neutrality Act had only just been taken off the books and Senator Borah was still making his stately declamations from the Senate floor, it would have strained the imagination of any American to picture American troops, and particularly troops under General MacArthur's command, suffering militarily unnecessary losses because an international convention of diplomats thought it the wisest policy. A number of people here find reflected in General MacArthur's understandably bitter words about "the privileged sanctuary" across the Yalu River one development, anyway, that promises well for the future of human society.

—RICHARD H. ROVERE

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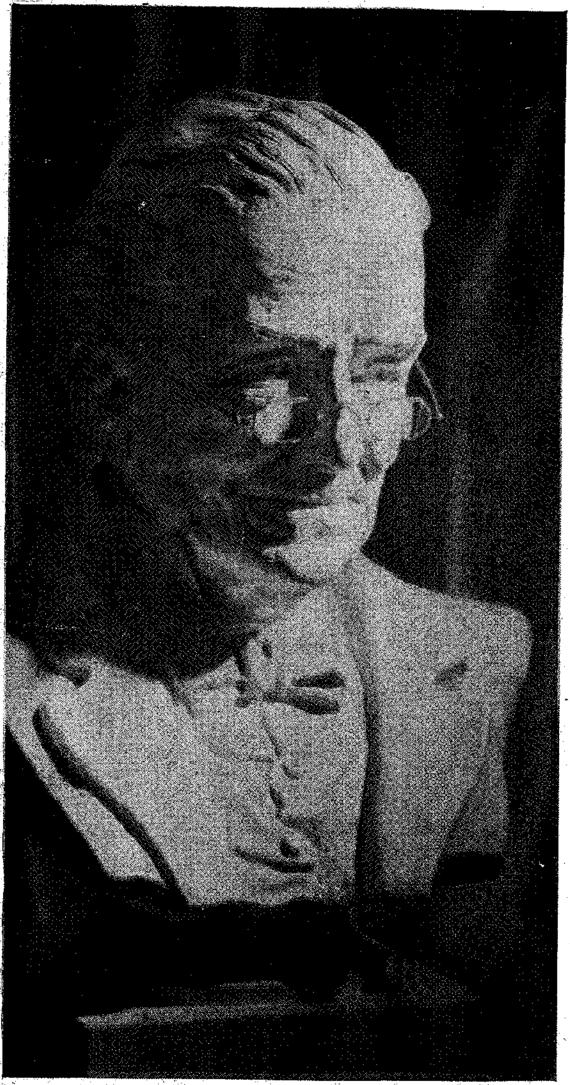

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